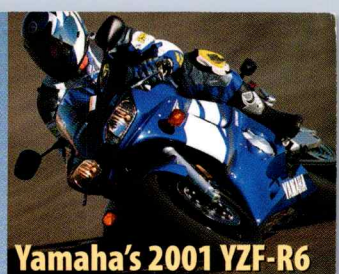


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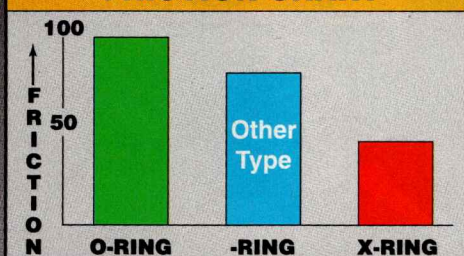
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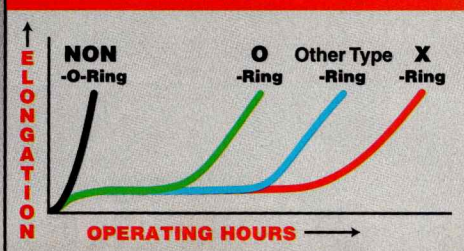


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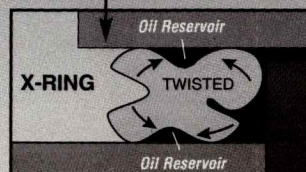
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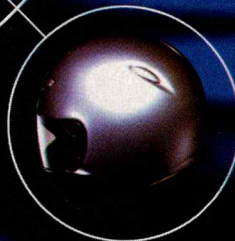
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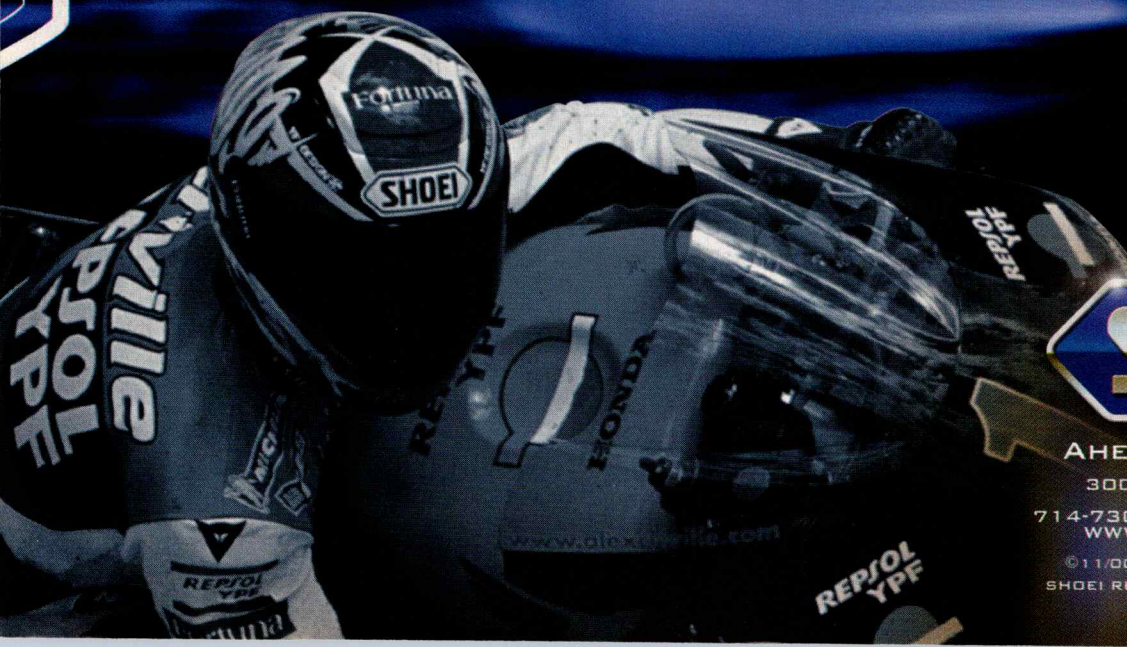


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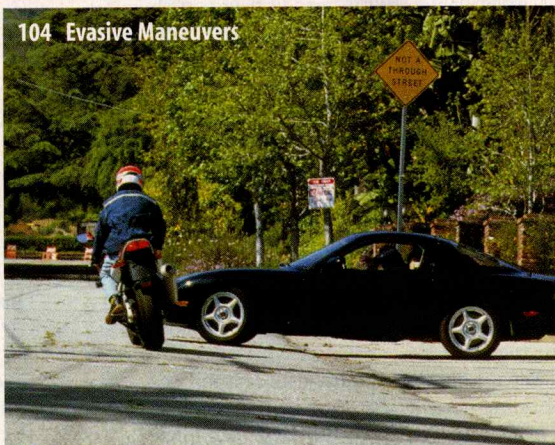
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on the cover

Westward ho! Pioneering photographer Kevin Wing catches the 2001 Gold Wing and Editor at Large Tim Carrithers at the end of their crossing. Riches ensued.

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lean angle

Wings Over America

THE CALL ARRIVED ON MY VOICEMAIL EARLY SUNDAY morning. The voice belonged to Editor at Large Tim Carrithers, who was somewhere in Arkansas on his way back to California from the GL1800 press introduction in Ohio. Things were going well, Tim reported, the bike proving every bit the phenomenal distance-inhaler he'd anticipated.

I could easily visualize the scene: TC filling the GL with fuel, swapping CDs, recording mileage, etc. The image was clear because I'd been there—not on the latest GL, of course, but on a load of previous-generation Wings during so many high-mileage treks of my own.

Truth is, I've got a ton of GL seat time, more, I'll bet, than most of you would guess. My first experience with Honda's grand tourer was in 1985, just a week after I'd joined *Motorcyclist*. Then-Editor Art Friedman had come up with what he felt was a Grand Idea: a comparison test of long-haul touring tires. That, of course, meant doing Major Mileage, all on full-dressers, all on interstates and all within a single week. You can imagine who got tapped to carry out the testing. The three 1400-mile round trips from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City (where I'd lived before moving to L.A.) I did with a fellow

staffer on a pair of GL1200s the following week were grueling, but also reasonably fun—though they seem more

entertaining now than halfway through that second run north.

Seems like I headed to SLC to visit family and friends just about every month over the next few years, and almost always on a Gold Wing (though I did take the odd Cavalcade, Venture or Voyager when a GL wasn't available). But instead of being grueling, those 11-hour treks (one-way) were actually relaxing, therapeutic almost. (OK, there was that one trip in December when it snowed most of the way north of Vegas, but that's another story.) There's something about being totally on your own as you glide through the southwestern desert and western Rockies watching the sagebrush and scrub-pine mountains roll by to the sounds of Jerry Garcia and Jackson Browne...something that lets you sit back, forget the stress of deadlines and consider the big picture.

What I discovered during those hundreds of riding hours is that long-haul touring on a *touring* bike is hugely different than long-hauling on something sportier—least of all in terms of the actual machine you're riding. For me (and for most of you who ride big-rig tourers, I'd imagine), the differences are mental. It's a state-of-mind thing.

And the new GL? In a word, superb. (See page 32 for our road test.) But what impresses me more than the bike's functional excellence is the tightrope Honda walked when engineering the thing. Honda very definitely wanted the new Wing to be faster, sportier, less bulky and more fun to ride. But it also had to be a Gold Wing, a bike that could be accepted by the hundreds of thousands of current Wing fans. And that meant including enough comfort, features, style, smoothness and the attention-to-detail that's always been a GL hallmark.

Believe me, Honda got it right. Ride well.

Mitch Boehm, Editor

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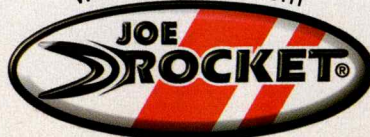
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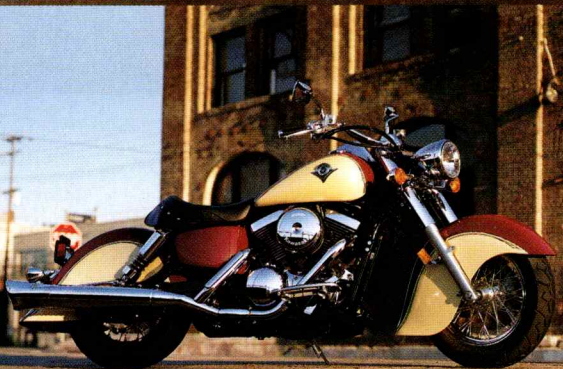
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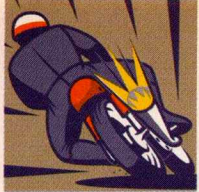
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by Andrew Trevitt, associate editor *Sport Rider*

Yes, I have no car

THE LOOKS ON PEOPLE'S FACES WHEN I TELL THEM motorcycles are my only mode of transportation are priceless. In a city where nobody walks and *everyone* drives, I'm somewhat of an anomaly. The expressions I get are often incredulous ("How *do* you manage?"); sometimes sympathetic ("Don't they pay you enough?"); but always with a hint of disbelief ("Dude, no way!"). Truth is, going carless in Southern California just isn't a big deal; there have only been a few times I've wished I had four wheels instead of two.

The big advantage of motorcycling in California (aside from the great roads) is lane-sharing (also called lane-splitting). No matter how nasty the weather or how thick the traffic, it takes me no more than 45 minutes to get to work, a commute I've heard can take up to twice as long by car. Done smartly, lane-sharing is both quicker and safer than sitting in line waiting to be rear-ended by that Buick. Parking is easy, too, as most lots have motorcycle-only areas and don't charge for use of them. So while cage drivers do lot-laps looking for a spot, I'm parked and through the door.

It's when the weather gets ugly that things get really interesting. There's none of this "Oh,

I'll just take the car today" stuff when it's raining. Of course, when it rains and I'm at home, my rainsuit and waterproof boots and gloves are ready to go, right where I left them—at the office. I learned pretty quickly to leave some extra clothes at work, too; rainsuits and Aerostich suits tend to leak right at

We've become quite adept with the bungee/tank bag/knapsack combination for carting stuff home—though getting a loaf of bread home in a nonsquished state is still an accomplishment.

the crotch, and showing up for work just once looking like I'd had an, um, accident was embarrassing enough.

California winters bring their share of cold along with the rain, especially in the hills. Shortly after I started at *Sport Rider*, I rode to a STAR Roadracing School in Pahrump, Nevada, without even thinking (gosh, that's so unlike me) I could have thrown a bike in the back of the company van and driven there. Nobody told me there were mountains between here and Nevada! I was fine on the trip there—long johns, two pairs of socks, leathers, sweatshirt and rainsuit. But the way back was a different story. "Gee, I didn't notice that white sand by the highway on my way out here...." Before long the snow was sticking to the road, and I ended up riding at 20 mph on the shoulder for more than an hour. No, I don't mind the rain so much, or the cold. But together they can be a nuisance, especially if they last for more than a few days; putting on wet gloves and boots on a cold morning is no fun at all.

Luckily for me the Missus doesn't mind being carted to school on the back of a bike, or—gasp!—taking the bus. Together we've

been caught in the rain only a handful of times. (Guess who gets the rainsuit?) But aside from the odd maniacal dog, our commutes have been relatively uneventful.

Buying groceries is always an adventure. We've become quite adept with the bungee/tank bag/knapsack combination for carting stuff home—though getting a loaf of bread home in a nonsquished state is still an accomplishment. It's always fun to have to "just pick something up" on the way home; it never fails that I'm wearing my Aerostich on those particular days. In a motorcycling environment, 'stiches are stylish, popular and functional—but in the local Target store? It's hard to be inconspicuous with the suit swish-swishing away like snow-pants with every step.

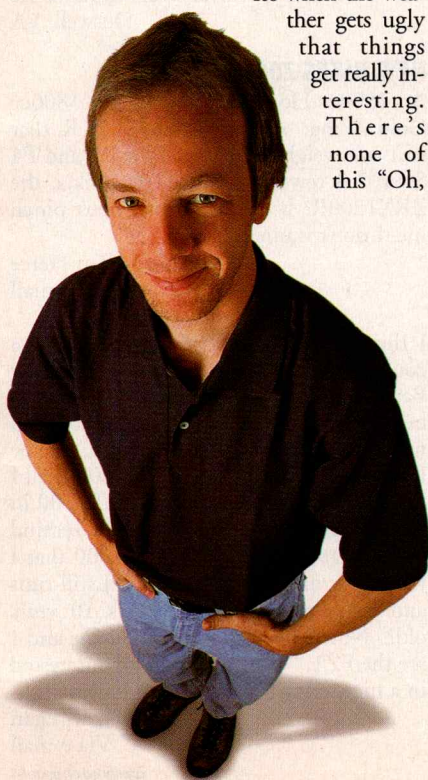
Knowing the wrath I'd encounter if I didn't arrive home from work with flowers

for my wife on our anniversary, I stopped at the local shop and picked up some long-stemmed roses. Hmmm, how to get those home safely? They fit great in a knapsack; the zipper holds them in place, and only about a foot or so of flowerage sticks out the top for all the world to see. Sure enough, all the neighborhood kids were hanging by the gate when I arrived home, and I was the center of attention while I searched endlessly for the garage-door opener.

About the only times I've really wanted to be in a car are those 105-degree days when I ride into the San Fernando Valley and see all the people driving in air-conditioned comfort while I do my best lobster impression. Riding without proper gear is something I just can't do, and stopping at a light in town is like standing in a monstrous Easy Bake oven.

But it's not enough of an incentive to rush out and buy a car. Besides, I'd lose the shock value of telling people I have no car. Where's the fun in that?

Andrew Trevitt





backfires

MOTY MADNESS

I began worrying about you folks when you ranked the GSX-R750 third (of four) in the July issue's "Superbikes 2000!" story. But with the GSX-R750 winning this year's MOTY award [December 2000], my faith has been restored. Anyone who can't see the massive and undeniable significance of this motorcycle is either ignorant or not paying attention (a lot like today's voting public). Here you've got a 750 equaling—and in some ways *beating*—true open-classes; a 750 that's arguably the best production roadracer ever made; and a bike that combines absolutely wicked engine and chassis performance in a package that's fairly comfortable to commute or short-tour on. A great choice. The right choice. Kudos.

Jeffery Booth
New York, NY

As a longtime rider and reader of *Motorcyclist*, I have to voice my opinion about your MOTY pick. The GSX-R750 is a great bike based on only one thing: numbers. It's got limited focus, plus the fact that to even use it "properly" you have to be on a track, or risk jail time. Don't get me wrong; I own a ZX-11, and I love sportbikes. But the MOTY trophy should mean more than just quarter-mile times.

Don Noerenberg
Via e-mail

Limited focus? Quarter-mile times? You're either not paying attention or.... Read Mr. Booth's e-mail for enlightenment.—Ed.

So the Bandit 1200 gets a little blurb under "Affordable Little Naked Bikes" while the Speed Triple and ZRX1100 receive accolades as "Best Hooligan" and "Best Naked Bike"? Maybe in stock trim, but.... (By the way, I enjoy paying liability rates for full coverage on this Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde "gentleman's sport cruiser," and am doing burnouts and wheelies all the way to the bank.)

Jeff Stone
Via e-mail

The ZRX1100 Owners Association (www.zrx1100.com) is very proud to have the mighty ZRX named "Best Naked

Bike" for 2000. I'd like to point out you used a photo of the 1999 ZRX in the section, though.

David Revis
ZRX1100 Owners Association

Page 32, December 2000 issue, heading: "Best Naked Bike." The Kawasaki



ZRX1100 is listed. Good. It certainly deserves accolades. But note the accompanying text: "The ZRX was the first of its kind to really capture the hearts of aged enthusiasts. (Remember the Zephyr? Kawasaki would rather not.)" I don't know any Kawasaki big-wigs, and it may be true that the Zephyrs were not the sales successes that Kawasaki had hoped. But it also seems like a slur of the bikes and the company.

Page 34, heading: "Best Trend: Affordable Little Naked Bikes." A picture of the Kawasaki ZR-7, along with text praising the bike, fill out the section. Good. I like the trend and am glad that you do too. But note that the ZR-7 is nothing more than a rebadged 750 Zephyr with less-appealing bodywork and a single, nonadjustable shock to replace the two adjustable units of the old Zephyr. So, did you just not like the old Zephyr name?

Josh Solberg
Via e-mail

Yes, but...there's the cost issue. In '91, the Zephyr 750 sold for \$4699, and Kawasaki's second-string 600, the Ninja 600R, was only \$150 more. In 2000, the ZR-7 was \$1300 cheaper than the ZX-6. That's what we call value.—Ed.

Thanks so much for naming Mike Traynor the 2000 *Motorcyclist* of the Year. You couldn't have chosen a better recipient. Think of all the additional pediatric brain tumor research dollars you'll have helped

generate with the added exposure of the Ride For Kids!

Susan Smith
Via e-mail

I wanted to comment on your choice of the R1100RT as "Touring Bike of the Year." I own a 1996 R1100RT and a 1999 K1200LT. I have two homes 2500 miles apart, so I need both bikes. I absolutely love them. Each has its own unique features and style. Which would I want to tour on for 500- to 1000-mile days? I'd take the K12 any day. I know your bias is toward sportbikes, and I like that, but on this one I would have gone with the LT.

Ray Abraham
Via e-mail

RIDIN' AND FLYIN'

It must be natural human psychology to wonder if anyone feels about something the way that you do, and to be overjoyed when you find out that someone actually feels exactly the way you do about something. Such was my feeling after reading "A Tale of Two Cultures" in the December 2000 issue. I've had a private pilot's license for 35 years, and have been riding two-wheelers for longer than that. You nailed the subject, Mr. Cook. Thanks for the pleasure of a perfect editorial.

William T. "Silver Bear" Watkins III
Doswell, VA

NEW BIKES 2001

A new 1800cc Honda cruiser? A new Gold Wing? An open-class GSX-R that isn't overweight? A naked YZF-R1 and F4 Strada? A reworked ZRX1100—a.k.a. the ZRX1200R? If I'm dreaming, don't pinch me. I don't wanna wake up!

Ben Pierce
Via e-mail

I think it's happening again. It started a couple years ago when I saw the new Bandit 1200 in your magazine. I remember thinking, "Gee, that sure does remind me of my beloved 1983 GS1100E; maybe it's time to...naaaahhhh. My FJ1200 is all I need." Then you showed the ZRX1100 in your pages. "Gee, that sure does remind me of that hot-rodded '78 KZ1000 that I traded for my 1100E. But my FJ still runs and looks new! So what if it's 10 years old?" Now I open this month's issue and I see the FZ1. "Gee...." Anybody interested in a nice, clean FJ1200?

Richard Egan
Via e-mail

continued on page 84

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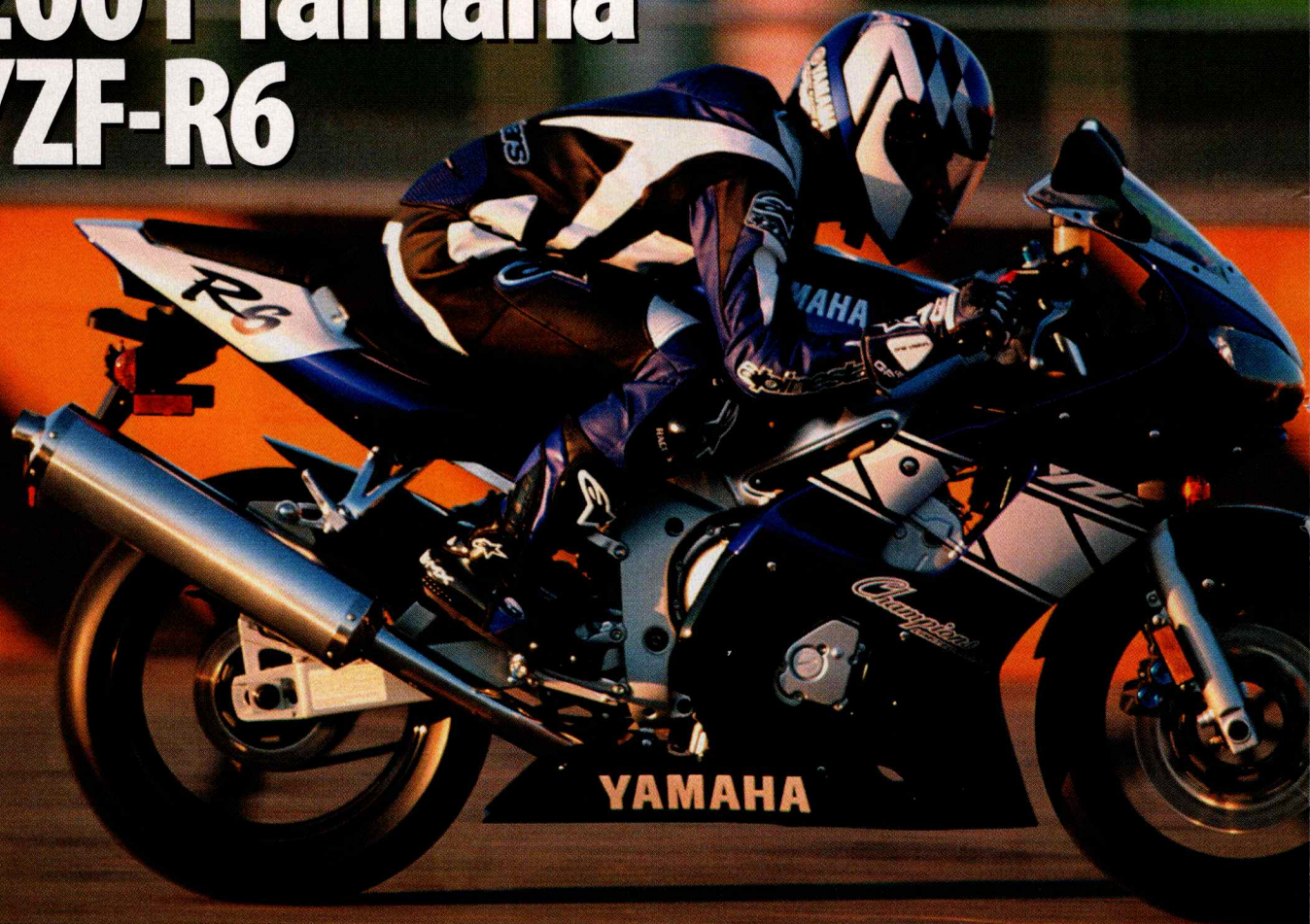
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Up to Speed

compiled by
Garrett Kai

JAPAN: Don Helle EUROPE: Alan Cathcart and Roland Brown MIDWEST DESK: Darwin Holmstrom

2001 Yamaha YZF-R6



Editor's Note: As we wait patiently for Yamaha to bring the 2001-spec YZF-R6 state-side (next month, we hear), our friends at Motor Cycle News had the opportunity to ride a reworked R6 alongside the 2001 GSX-R600. Here's their report.

AFTER SUZUKI'S EUROPEAN LAUNCH OF THE NEW-FOR-2001 GSX-R600 IN Valencia, Spain, last month, the question on everyone's lips has been this: Can the Suzuki whip the previous racetrack-king Yamaha YZF-R6? Mildly updated for 2001, the R6 faces stiff competition from the all-new Suzuki and comes to battle with a series of important engine and chassis improvements. Visually, it's different, with a redesigned tail unit housing a set of circular LEDs peering through clear lenses—a first for the factory.

Power has been raised by 1.9 horsepower, to a claimed 119.9 at the crank. (*Motorcyclist's* last R6 test bike produced 96.4 rear-wheel horsepower.)





Clear-lens LED taillights (top) are the most visible changes for 2001; the R1-style rear-wheel hugger is also new. Shorter, lighter pistons with a special low-friction coating (above) coupled with other internal changes create a slight power bump. Total weight is said to be down by 3.3 pounds.

Weight-saving changes help cut 3.3 pounds from the latest R6, to a claimed 369 pounds dry, within 10 pounds of the GSX-R.

Cadwell Park's short circuit has just the right amount of twists and turns to test the bikes' agility. Compared with the Suzuki, which is closely related to the GSX-R750, the R6 feels small and dense, with a thinly padded seat, stubby, high-set footrests and tight, sloping clip-ons. The riding position is so compact that gloved mitts get

caught on the top of the fuel tank at full lock. This has always been the R6's strength: a high-revving 600cc four packed into the most compact package possible.

Yamaha's year-'01 changes result in subtle improvements—a bit more top-end power here and an increment of improved maneuverability there—but they don't serve to keep a gap on the Suzuki. Over the short rise heading into Park Corner, the R6 will slowly gain ground on the GSX-R, but once hard on the brakes, it's clear that the Suzuki's chassis is handling the braking forces better than the R6's. In fact, the Yamaha is doing a merry little cha-cha-cha into the apex. The Suzuki's longer wheelbase and more linear power delivery make it easier to keep the front tire on the ground coming out of slower corners.

In the end, all that's a bit nit-picky. Still, there's no doubt that, despite the R6's various tweaks, the bike will definitely have its hands full this coming season with the new GSX-R, both on the track and on the street. Happily, we all benefit.

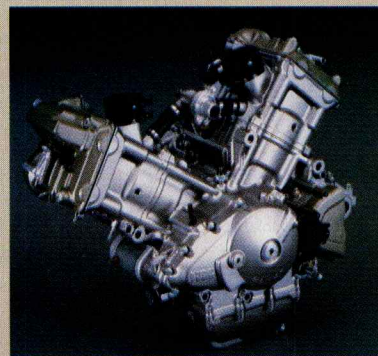


Debt of Honor

The Honda-Mondial Connection

Following in the tire tracks of legendary rival MV Agusta is the latest of Italy's illustrious trophy marques to make its comeback: Mondial. Now owned by wealthy Italian newspaperman Roberto Ziletti, Mondial launched the Piega 1000 V-twin Superbike at Munich, but carefully left it to observers to spot (not all of whom managed to do so before rushing into print!) what was hidden behind the bike's undeniably Tamburini-esque fairing. This turned out to be not the Suzuki TL1000R motor promised in the prelaunch build-up, but another Japanese V-twin engine of even more illustrious hue—the 2000 World Superbike title-winning Honda RC51 motor.

This is, in fact, the first time Honda has ever agreed to sell engines to other manufacturers for installation in their own machines. It comes about, Ziletti says, as repayment of a debt of honor dating back to 1957, when Soichiro Honda was cheeky enough to ask Mondial's Count Boselli to sell him one of the DOHC singles with which Mondial had just clinched both the



Honda will repay its debt of honor to Mondial by providing its V-twin RC51 engine for the new Piega 1000 Superbike.

125 and 250 world championships—defeating MV Agusta in the process! The Italian nobleman agreed, and the bike is now displayed in Honda's Motegi Collection Hall. So when Mondial asked for the favor to be repaid with the supply of RC51 motors for the Piega, Honda apparently felt the only decent thing to do was to agree.

Weighing approximately 400 pounds in street guise, the Piega will at first be built exclusively in a limited edition of 250 bikes, available through the Mondial Web site (www.mondialmoto.it) as of January 1, 2001, at a price of approximately \$25,000. Parts and service will come from a network of distributors that Ziletti says is presently being set up. All this is in order to homologate the bike for Italian National Superbike competition for the second half of 2001, with a full World Superbike series campaign planned for 2002 under the control of the company's design chief (and former Aprilia GP race engineer) Nicola Bragagnolo. No word yet on whether the bikes will appear in the United States.

—Alan Cathcart



TIME WARP

BRAND SPANKIN' NEW GOLD WINGS WERE ALSO ON THE MENU IN OUR FEBRUARY 1988 ISSUE WHEN we tested Honda's then-new GL1500 six-cylinder. We raved about the smooth and torquey 1520cc motor, spacious luggage, on-board air compressor, electric reverse, full-feature Panasonic audio system and massive comfort level. While other touring rigs of the '80s had more performance, nothing could match the long-haul comfort and wind/weather protection of the big Wing. We also tested the second-generation, new-for-'88 GSX-R750, which offered a fresh aluminum chassis, big-bore, short-stroke motor and 17-inch wheels on both ends. It was fast but fat, and it set the stage for seven more years of overweight GSX-R750s. Luckily for enthusiasts, Suzuki got its bearings back in '96. The rest is history.



KEL EDGE

Euro Notes

by Alan Cathcart

■ KTM, the Austrian king of the off-road world, unveiled its eagerly awaited 75-degree V-twin LC8 engine at InterMot last December, and in doing so established a new benchmark

for all other manufacturers of V-twin motorcycles. Designer Gerald Kiske's avant-garde Adventurer street-going trailie—looking like an off-road version of the MV Agusta F4 with its stacked headlight layout—shows one future application for the 942cc engine, which Stefan Peirer, KTM chairman, confirms will also power a leading-edge rally machine, a Duke-type street rod and a street-performance model.

Weighing an impressively light 123 pounds including six-speed gearbox, DOHC four-valve heads and forged pistons, the new twin has a hydraulic clutch and an electric starter cleverly tucked away in a patented position between the Vee of the narrow-angle cylinders. KTM says it not only scales 37.4 pounds (17 kg) less than, for example, a Suzuki TL1000 motor, it's also much narrower, can be fitted with either fuel injection or carbs

(as on the prototype displayed), and is capable of being built in displacements varying from 800cc to 1000cc, with different engine dimensions depending on each application. The quoted output of 102 hp at 8000 rpm for the LC8 in Adventurer guise already gives an impressive power-to-weight ratio in a complete bike scaling 416 pounds. But the engine's ultrashort stroke hints at other things, a fact confirmed by its designer Klaus Holweg, who by no coincidence headed up the Aprilia RSV Mille 60-degree V-twin engine design team for the first two years of its development at KTM's Austrian rival Rotax, before switching sides to create the LC8. "The bottom half of this engine has been designed to be good for outputs up to 175 hp," Holweg says, "and we have applications in mind for this kind of potential."

KTM engineering chief Wolfgang Felber—himself a capable 250cc GP

roadracer a decade ago—confirms this. "The LC8 opens the way for a completely new range of products for KTM," he says. "We will begin with our traditional off-road markets, but I can say that this engine's arrival allows me to develop the kind of motorcycles I've dreamed of building ever since I came to work here!" The advent of this engine from the world's leading off-road manufacturer suddenly makes many of the V-twin products of their tarmac competition look undeniably flabby, and Felber also confirms the logical next step: to develop a replacement for KTM's current LC4 family of four-valve enduro singles, based on using one-half of the LC8 engine.

■ MuZ's next-generation twin-cylinder range also made its debut at InterMot in the form of the 1000S sportbike with New Edge styling by Peter Kaumann, whose studio was also responsible for the less performance-orientated BMW C1 half-a-car.

Powered by a liquid-cooled DOHC eight-valve fuel-injected parallel-twin engine producing a claimed 125 hp at 11,000 rpm in prototype form, with twin balance shafts and 180-degree crank throw, the 1000S is likely to adopt the Kobra name of the company's acclaimed Yamaha TDM-



ROLAND BROWN



ROLAND BROWN

Two types of twins made their debut at InterMot. The KTM Adventurer features an all new 75-degree V-twin LC-8 engine, while the MuZ 1000S boasts a 125-hp fuel-injected parallel-twin.

engined prototype sportbike from the mid-1990s by the time it reaches the European marketplace in the spring of 2002. Thereafter, MuZ plans to launch at least one new model every year based on its parallel-twin

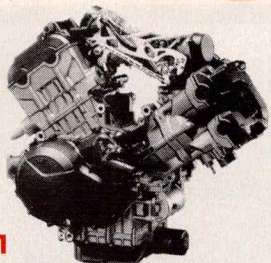
family, which already exists in 600cc and 750cc engine formats (though the projected supercharged version has been scrapped, says Peter-Karel Korous, MuZ-Boss). One of these will be a 750cc Supersport contender, as well as 600/750 and 1000cc naked roadster models, and a 1000cc sport-tourer. Hong Leong bike boss Ron Lim confirms that funding is in place for this volume of product development, of which the 1000S displayed at InterMot is the lead-in model.

Road testing of this bike will begin in December, with the first two production models set to be launched at the Paris Show a year from now—a sportbike similar to the 1000S, and a naked bike. And, says Korous, MuZ has its own four-stroke Grand Prix project underway and a three-year contract with a major sponsor to help fund the development of a fuel-injected 990cc V-four race engine set to debut in 2002.

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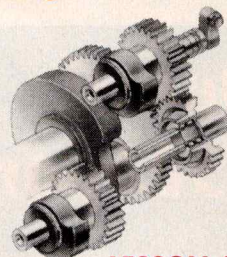
LESSON 2

Steering, wheel alignment, and frame repair. Tune-ups.



LESSON 3

Valve disassembly and repair.



LESSON 4

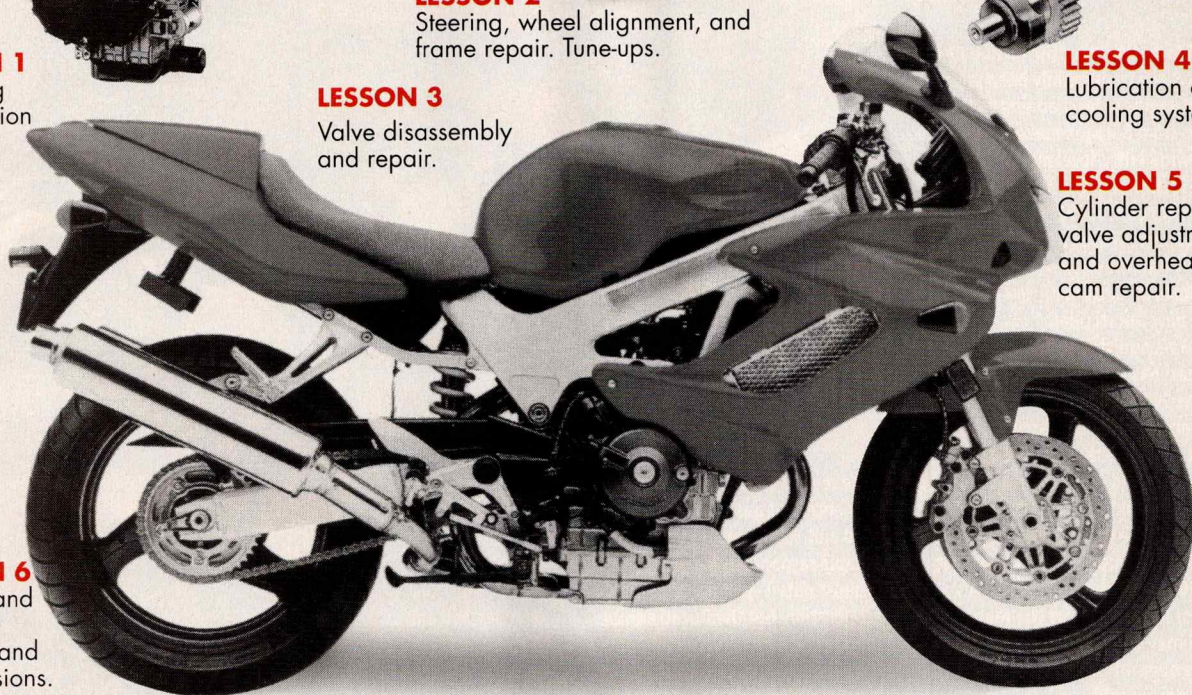
Lubrication and cooling systems.

LESSON 5

Cylinder repair, valve adjustment, and overhead cam repair.

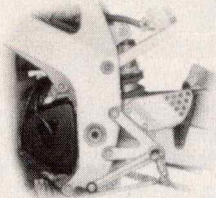
LESSON 6

Service and repair of clutches and transmissions.



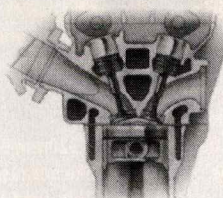
LESSON 7

Basic parts and tools of motorcycle repair.



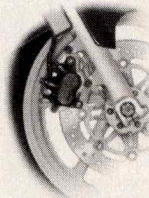
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LESSON 9

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THE ART OF THE MOTORCYCLE

IN VEGAS, THEY KNOW HOW TO OPEN A SHOW. THAT'S WHY the Art of the Motorcycle exhibit will be the opening gambit at the Guggenheim's Las Vegas annex, to be built at the Venetian Resort. The Art of the Motorcycle premiered in 1998 in New York and features more than 120 motorcycles. Displayed in chronological order, the exhibit follows the evolution of motorcycle technology and design from steam-engined bicycles all the way to modern-day superbikes. The Vegas exhibition will include approximately 180 pieces of previously unseen memorabilia. It's due to open in the summer of 2001.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM; COLLECTION OF DOUG STRANGE

Ducati 750 Sport

FIRST RIDE

DUCATIS, LIKE ALL THINGS RED AND fast, have traditionally been pricey. That seems to be changing as the boys from Bologna make a run at the growing entry-level market. With the inclusion of the already popular Monster 600 (\$5995) and the all-new 750 Sport (\$7695) to the U.S. lineup, entry into the desmo fraternity looks to be getting much easier for the new Ducati rider.

In recognition of that new rider, Ducati has taken the 750cc version of its 900 Supersport model, stripped it to the bare essentials, and named it the 750 Sport. The fuel-injected engine is retained but in five-speed, air-cooled form, in which guise the desmo V-twin produces a claimed 64 horsepower at 8250 rpm at the rear wheel. It's a lot of motorcycle for the money, and may well succeed in enticing a new generation of sportbikers into the desmo fold.

Thumb the starter, and shortly after the 90-degree V-twin has boomed to life, the budget nature of the bike becomes apparent. The 750 Sport's motor seems somewhat flaccid, with just 45 foot-pounds of torque at 6000 rpm: It really needs

to be revved hard to give useful performance. But gas it up between 4000 and 7000 rpm and there's reasonable response and a great exhaust note—just not a lot of acceleration. Get the Ducati engine thundering a little higher and performance picks up, accompanied by increased vibration. The shifting is precise, though the clutch is stiff and doesn't like being slipped for fast take-offs.

Handling is good, with the well-proven steel-tube chassis giving a planted yet nimble feel. Cost had to have been an issue behind the

Ducati aims low as it introduces two new motorcycles for the United States. Both the Monster 600 and the 750 Sport are reasonably priced and serve as ideal starting points for a new generation of Ducati faithful.

single 320mm Brembo disc fitted to the bike because it lacks power and feel. This dead-feeling system has no place on a bike aimed at neophyte riders, and while doubling-up on the discs would presumably do the trick, it shouldn't be necessary on a V-twin weighing 403 pounds dry (according to Ducati). The rear brake works well, except that without a slipper-clutch fitted you can't afford to get overeager with engine braking.

The 750 Sport has smooth pick-up from down low, but its power delivery is too progressive to satisfy the sportbike customer. The engine feels happiest running at around 7000 rpm, where the windblast helps take weight off your wrists. You also appreciate the fact that Ducati has

finally done away with its most infamous feature, the suicide stand, which is singlehandedly responsible for keeping Ducati's bodywork suppliers working overtime.

Launching the 750 Sport in the United States is likely a good move for Ducati. It'll not only help introduce a whole new group of riders to the desmo fold, but also help expand Ducati's marketshare somewhat, which hasn't been helped much by sales of the 900 Supersport, ST2 and ST4 sport-tourers which trail the 996/748 and Monster models. Still, the 750's relative lack of performance means its stiffest competitors will be used 900 Supersports, whose only disadvantage is the lack of a new-bike warranty. —Alan Cathcart

KEL EDGE



KEL EDGE



Monster 600

KEL EDGE

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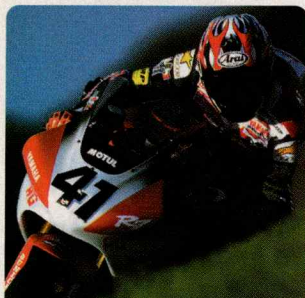


MC GIVEAWAY

OK, LADIES AND GENTS, IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR AN MC GIVEAWAY! (Actually, we need your help to remove some of the swag that's threatening our breathing space in the office.) What we want this time around are stories about the most embarrassing thing you've ever gotten caught with in your saddlebags or luggage. Of the first 50 responses, the best answer will receive a handy-dandy Harley-Davidson Roadtool and the runner-up will get a bottle of Griot's Garage Chrome Polish! Send it to the usual: MC Giveaway, *Motorcyclist*, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048 or mcmal@emapusa.com. Please, no photos!



PHOTOS: JAMES BROWN



Haga!

Nobody was surprised to see Noriyuki Haga leave World Superbike for the 500 World Championship, but few predicted that Yamaha would fold its factory team upon Haga's departure. Yamaha will support its World Supersport team and provide updated kit parts to WSC privateers. Development of the R7 will continue for United States and Japanese Factory Superbike Teams and for the Suzuka 8-hour race.

Suzuki TL1000 Roadster?

BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF the 2001s, we were busy blending rumor with desire and predicted a bike called an SV1000. Well, we were wrong; no such animal for this year. But, as you can see from this photo-illustration, we're not alone in hoping for a naked big V-twin. Combining elements from the evergreen Bandits as well as major componentry from the existing TLs, the SV1000 could be a slam-dunk engineering exercise.

Should we be given the keys to the asylum, we'd make the bike look just like this, ditch the rotary damper at the rear for a conventional shock and price the bike closer to the Bandit 1200 than the TL1000R. Then all the miscreants who've outgrown their SV650s will have somewhere to go.

Two words, Suzuki: Do it.



studiomoto

GLYN KERR

One For The Road

REMEMBER THIS THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE RUNNING RICH ON Watney's Red Barrel in some London pub. Rather than risk jail—or worse—by driving in a chemically compromised state, or running up a hefty cab fare and squinting through the post-party haze the next morning trying to recollect where you left the car, ring up One For The Road. Minutes later an obliging chap

will putter up on a Honda Z50, stow it in your boot (the trunk) and drive you home. And all for a fraction of what the equivalent cab ride would cost. Just make sure said trunk is empty.

Brilliant? Truly. London developer Allister Robinson and his mate Jason James concocted the scheme three years ago after putting away a pint too many themselves one night. Now if you ring up, you'll pay about \$15 for the first three miles, \$4.50 for the next five and \$3.00 per mile thereafter.

Upward of 90 inebriated types use the service on a good Saturday night. More than 3500 happy customers have awakened semihappily in their own bed (as opposed to very unhappily, sharing a cell with a 274-pound detainee named Nigel with dumpster breath and bad teeth) since One For The Road opened for business. The original quartet of Honda Monkeybikes has expanded to a squad of 40, and business is good. Good enough that Robinson and company are expanding operations in the United Kingdom and investigating the possibilities of coming to America. Meanwhile, write this bit down

next time you're having a pint or three on their side of the big pond. —Tim Carrithers

One For The Road comes to the rescue of over-served London revelers with these nifty Honda Z50s. After stowing his bike in the trunk, the cheerfully sober attendant drives fares home in their own cars. Cars wake up in their own garage. Drivers wake up in their own beds. Everybody's happy.

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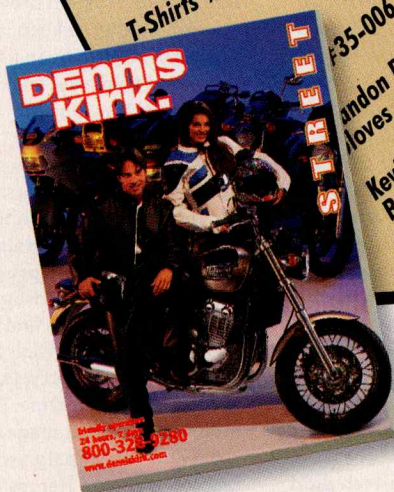
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Houston's Trail's End Restaurant

GETAWAYS

Where the waitresses can wing ya

KANAB, UTAH, IS ONE OF THOSE QUIET LITTLE oases in an expansive desert of rocks and sagebrush that stretches to the horizon in every direction. Towering multicolored cliffs surround the town, and with every sunset they glow red, pink and yellow. Located halfway between Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon National Parks, Kanab is a popular rest stop for weary travelers; and Houston's Trail's End Restaurant has been serving them since 1975.

Houston's is the place where you need a reservation when every other restaurant in town is empty. Each evening a line of patrons waiting to be seated pours out onto the sidewalk. It serves meals as big as the Western sky and hearty enough to satisfy the hungriest cowboy. Their barbecued pork, raspberry iced tea and (if you stop in for breakfast) pancakes wider than a



ROBERT H. MILLER

dinner plate have earned them a "thumbs up" reputation from California to Colorado.

In addition to the memorable entrees, there's something else that makes Houston's special: Old Winchester rifles, Frederic Remington sculptures and Indian artifacts cover the walls, and on the hip of each waitress you'll find a Colt "Peacemaker" revolver. When asked if they're allowed to "wing" patrons that don't leave an adequate tip, the waitresses jokingly reply, "Sure." And then they show you that the firing pin has been removed from each authentic revolver. At that moment you realize the Houstons aren't your average restaurateurs.

In 1977, Bob and Emma Houston started a mobile catering service that has served more than 3 million restaurant-style meals across the West. They are



equipped to serve more than 3000 remote meals three times a day and they've put that service to use feeding hungry firefighters in every western state.

After a long day of riding through the scorching heat and the dusty winds of the desert Southwest, seeing a prosperous town like Kanab and finding a memorable eatery like Houston's can seem almost like a mirage. Luckily they're not.

—Robert H. Miller

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TEAR-OFFS

■ In a completely unsurprising move, **Excelsior-Henderson has announced it will cease motorcycle production until 2002.** E.H. Partners, Inc., who purchased the company in September, 2000, had hoped to relaunch the company in 2001, but after an in-depth assessment it decided that significant reorganization needed to take place. 2001 will instead be spent restaffing, reestablishing a dealer network, fine-tuning the design of current models and developing new models. "At the appropriate time," E-H's Joel Norenberg says, "Excelsior-Henderson will return to the market with the very best heavyweight motorcycle technology, backed by a complete and well-financed marketing plan."

■ Cop-Spec YZF-R1s? British police have a **new weapon for catching speeders:** Yamaha's YZF-R1. The main role of the big-bore sportbike is to become a high-visibility deter-

rent, one they hope will cause riders to think twice about outrunning the law. The cop-spec R1 is completely stock except for blue and red strobe lights, police paint scheme and radio.

■ Out with the old, in with the new: Robert Rasor has been named the **new AMA president** following the retirement of J. Scott Thornton, who had served as president since November, 1999. Rasor has been a member of the AMA staff since 1973 and most recently served as the AMA Vice President for government relations.

■ After 36 months of development, the **National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety** has been published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Co-sponsored by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) and NHTSA, the Agenda was intended to create a road map of the most pressing motorcycle-safety issues for the

coming decade and provide direction about how to best improve motorcycling safety. The document considers a number of human, social, environmental and technical factors that appear to be significant in the motorcycling safety picture, and suggests strategies, research and actions to improve safety in those fields. Our own Art Friedman was the principal investigator for the project. You can read the report online at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/motorcycle/> or order a hard copy by sending a written request to: Joey Syner, NHTSA, NTS, 5400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, D.C., 20590.

■ We call this high-tech product development: European Suzuki GSX1300R Hayabusas will **not be recalled for alleged subframe failures.** To prove the Busa subframe is safe, British Suzuki engineers removed the bolts from the

upper mount and had an engineer hop on the subframe repeatedly. No part of the subframe came in contact with the rear wheel because the bike's dual exhaust system provides enough rigidity to keep it in place. There have been no reports of subframe failures on U.S.-model Hayabusas.

■ Suzuki kicks off its second year of football sponsorship: American Suzuki announced the **expansion of its Heisman Trophy sponsorship program.** The expanded advertising campaign is Suzuki's first to include all three divisions of the company: motorcycle, automotive and marine. The multimillion-dollar magazine, radio and TV campaign will feature "Heisman Heroes" ads including Tony Dorsett, Doug Flutie and Roger Staubach. In addition, Suzuki will expand the "You Choose The Winner" Heisman sweepstakes to include American Suzuki dealers nationwide.



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Have you ever thought about creating a motorcycle magazine? Here's your chance. Fill out the following survey (a photocopy is acceptable) and tell us what you think of *Motorcyclist*. In addition, one lucky reader's survey will be chosen to win a Hein Gericke Alien leather jacket and pants, a pair of Hein Gericke Speedware Claw gloves, and a Shoei Z-II helmet.

You can also send in your name and address on a three- by five-inch card if you can't be bothered with the survey (but we'll be hurt). If you choose not to give your name, and don't want the gear, we don't mind. Mail the survey to: *Motorcyclist* Reader Survey (Dodge), 6420 Wilshire Blvd. Floor 16, Los Angeles, CA 90048. The deadline is January 20, 2001, so don't delay—turn the page!



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No purchase necessary. To enter, complete and return the official entry form, a reasonable facsimile or a three- by five-inch card that includes your name, address and phone number. All entries become the property of *emap usa, inc.* The winner will be determined in a random drawing by a certified public accountant from all entries received by January 20, 2001. One entry per household. Sweepstakes limited to U.S. residents only. Decision will be final. Winner will be notified by mail and will be obligated to sign and return an affidavit of eligibility within 10 days of notification. In the event of noncompliance within this time period, an alternate winner will be selected. The odds of winning will be determined by the total number of entries received. Sweepstakes subject to local, state and federal laws and is void where prohibited. No substitute prize will be given nor will cash equivalent be paid. In accepting the prize, the winner grants *emap usa, inc.* the right to publicize and promote his or her photograph and winning of the award. Good only in the United States of America. Employees of *emap usa, inc.*, their families and its advertising agencies are not eligible for this contest.

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ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH MOTORCYCLING

1. Do you have a motorcycle license?
5-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
2. Do you belong to the American Motorcyclist Association?
6-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
3. How long have you been involved in motorcycling?
_____ years and/or _____ months (7-9)
4. Approximately how many **total** miles will you ride your motorcycle(s) in the next 12 months?
_____ (10-14)
5. Have you had formal rider training?
15-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
6. If yes, have you had racetrack training (e.g., California Superbike School, CLASS, etc.)?
16-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
7. Have you ever participated in motorcycle-related vacation tours?
17-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
8. Do you plan to attend any of the following major motorcycling rallies?
18-1 ☐ Americade 7 ☐ Laughlin
2 ☐ Daytona 8 ☐ Love Ride
Biketoberfest 9 ☐ Ride For Kids
3 ☐ Daytona 0 ☐ Sturgis
4 ☐ Del Mar x ☐ Other
5 ☐ Hollister y ☐ None of these
6 ☐ Honda Hoot
9. Do you participate in motorcycle-related competition?
19-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
10. Do you participate in "track days" with your street bike?
20-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

MOTORCYCLE OWNERSHIP

11. Do you personally own a motorcycle?
21-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No (if no, skip to Question 16)
12. How many motorcycles do you currently own?
_____ (22)
13. What type is your newest bike?
23-1 ☐ Cruiser (Shadow, Low Rider, etc.)
2 ☐ Touring (Gold Wing, K1100LT, etc.)
3 ☐ Sport (CBR, GSX-R, YZF, ZX, etc.)
4 ☐ Sport-touring (Concours, ST1100, etc.)
5 ☐ Standard (CB, KZ, GS, Zephyr, etc.)
6 ☐ Musclebike (V-Max, Magna, etc.)
7 ☐ Dual-sport
8 ☐ Scooter
9 ☐ Dirt only
14. What brand is your newest bike?
24-1 ☐ BMW 25-1 ☐ Kawasaki
2 ☐ Buell 2 ☐ Moto Guzzi
3 ☐ Cagiva 3 ☐ Suzuki
4 ☐ Ducati 4 ☐ Triumph
5 ☐ Harley- 5 ☐ Victory
Davidson 6 ☐ Yamaha
6 ☐ Honda 7 ☐ Other
7 ☐ Indian
15. How long was it from the time you started thinking about buying a new motorcycle to the time you made your purchase?
26-1 ☐ 1 month 4 ☐ 6-12 months
2 ☐ 2-3 months 5 ☐ More than 12 months
3 ☐ 4-6 months
16. Do any other members of your household own a motorcycle or ATV?
27-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
17. How many members of your household ride a motorcycle?
28-1 ☐ One 4 ☐ Four
2 ☐ Two 5 ☐ Five or more
3 ☐ Three
18. Thinking of all the motorcycle riding you do, rank the following 1, 2, 3 in order of what you do most.
_____ Touring (29)
_____ Sport-touring (30)
_____ Commuting (31)
_____ Off-road riding (32)
_____ Roadracing (33)
_____ Recreation/sport riding (34)

19. Are you planning to buy a motorcycle in the next 12 months?
35-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No (if no, skip to Question 24)
20. What brand of motorcycle are you planning to buy?
36-1 ☐ BMW 37-1 ☐ Kawasaki
2 ☐ Buell 2 ☐ Moto Guzzi
3 ☐ Cagiva 3 ☐ Suzuki
4 ☐ Ducati 4 ☐ Triumph
5 ☐ Harley- 5 ☐ Victory
Davidson 6 ☐ Yamaha
6 ☐ Honda 7 ☐ Other
7 ☐ Indian
21. Are you considering a new or used bike?
38-1 ☐ New 3 ☐ Both
2 ☐ Used 4 ☐ Not sure
22. What type of motorcycle are you planning to buy?
39-1 ☐ Cruiser 6 ☐ Musclebike
2 ☐ Touring 7 ☐ Dual-sport
3 ☐ Sport 8 ☐ Scooter
4 ☐ Sport-touring 9 ☐ Dirt only
5 ☐ Standard 0 ☐ Don't know
23. What displacement are you most likely to buy?
40-1 ☐ Under 300cc 5 ☐ 701-800cc
2 ☐ 301-450cc 6 ☐ 801-950cc
3 ☐ 451-550cc 7 ☐ 951-1150cc
4 ☐ 551-700cc 8 ☐ 1151cc or larger
24. In the past 12 months, have others asked for your advice about the purchase of a motorcycle, accessories or apparel? (Please check all that apply.)
41-1 ☐ Yes, was asked about motorcycle purchase
2 ☐ Yes, was asked about motorcycle accessory or apparel purchase
3 ☐ No, was not asked for advice
25. Do you shop online for used motorcycle parts, accessories or apparel?
42-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
26. Do you shop online for motorcycles?
43-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

EDITORIAL

27. Listed below are some of the features that appear regularly in *Motorcyclist*. Please indicate how frequently you read each of these features.

	Always (1)	Sometimes (2)	Never (3)
Accessory evaluations	☐	☐	☐ (44)
Archive	☐	☐	☐ (45)
Backfires	☐	☐	☐ (46)
Comparison tests	☐	☐	☐ (47)
Contents page	☐	☐	☐ (48)
Cruiser tests	☐	☐	☐ (49)
Gear Box	☐	☐	☐ (50)
How-To articles	☐	☐	☐ (51)
Info Page	☐	☐	☐ (52)
Lean Angle	☐	☐	☐ (53)
Megaphone	☐	☐	☐ (54)
Off the Record	☐	☐	☐ (55)
Project bikes	☐	☐	☐ (56)
Readers' Rides	☐	☐	☐ (57)
Retrospective/vintage articles	☐	☐	☐ (58)
Riding-technique articles	☐	☐	☐ (59)
Safety articles	☐	☐	☐ (60)
Sport (competition)	☐	☐	☐ (61)
Sportbike tests	☐	☐	☐ (62)
Tests of bikes 500-750cc	☐	☐	☐ (63)
Tests of bikes over 750cc	☐	☐	☐ (64)
Tests of dual-purpose bikes	☐	☐	☐ (65)
The Real World	☐	☐	☐ (66)
Touring articles	☐	☐	☐ (67)
Up to Speed	☐	☐	☐ (68)

READERSHIP

28. What is your main source of streetbike information?
69-1 ☐ Motorcyclist 6 ☐ Cycle World
2 ☐ Sport Rider 7 ☐ Rider
3 ☐ Motorcycle Cruiser 8 ☐ Roadracing World
4 ☐ American Motorcyclist 9 ☐ Other magazines
5 ☐ Cycle News

29. How did you get this particular copy of *Motorcyclist*?
70-1 ☐ Subscription
2 ☐ Purchased from store/newsstand
3 ☐ From someone else

30. Which magazines do you read regularly (that is, at least three out of four issues)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 71-1 ☐ Motorcyclist | 8 ☐ Roadracing |
| 2 ☐ Sport Rider | World |
| 3 ☐ Motorcycle Cruiser | 9 ☐ Dirt Rider |
| 4 ☐ American Motorcyclist | 72-1 ☐ Dirt Bike |
| 5 ☐ Cycle News | 2 ☐ Motocross Action |
| 6 ☐ Cycle World | 3 ☐ Racer X |
| 7 ☐ Rider | 4 ☐ Other magazines |

31. In addition to yourself, how many people read your copy of *Motorcyclist*?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 73-1 ☐ None | 4 ☐ Three |
| 2 ☐ One | 5 ☐ Four |
| 3 ☐ Two | 6 ☐ Five or more |

AFTERMARKET PRODUCTS

32. What is your main source of information for purchasing motorcycle aftermarket products (i.e., apparel, performance or maintenance products)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 74-1 ☐ Motorcyclist | 6 ☐ Cycle World |
| 2 ☐ Sport Rider | 7 ☐ Rider |
| 3 ☐ Motorcycle Cruiser | 8 ☐ Roadracing World |
| 4 ☐ American Motorcyclist | 9 ☐ Internet |
| 5 ☐ Cycle News | 0 ☐ Dealer |
| | x ☐ Other |

33. On average, how much do you spend on motorcycle performance products (including tires) each year?
\$ _____ (75-78)

34. Where do you usually purchase your motorcycle performance products?
80-1

- | |
|---|
| 5-1 ☐ Motorcycle dealer/accessory shop |
| 2 ☐ Dealer orders it from ad in magazine |
| 3 ☐ Mail order |
| 4 ☐ Online e-tailer |

35. On average, how much do you spend on motorcycle apparel products (including helmets) each year?
\$ _____ (6-9)

36. Where do you usually purchase your motorcycle apparel?

- | |
|---|
| 10-1 ☐ Motorcycle dealer/accessory shop |
| 2 ☐ Dealer orders it from ad in magazine |
| 3 ☐ Mail order |
| 4 ☐ Online e-tailer |

37. On average, how much do you spend on motorcycle maintenance products (i.e., oil, battery, chain) each year?
\$ _____ (11-14)

38. Where do you usually purchase your motorcycle maintenance products?

- | |
|---|
| 15-1 ☐ Motorcycle dealer/accessory shop |
| 2 ☐ Dealer orders it from ad in magazine |
| 3 ☐ Mail order |
| 4 ☐ Online |

39. What brand of front tire is on your most current streetbike?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 16-1 ☐ Avon | 7 ☐ Maxxis |
| 2 ☐ Bridgestone | 8 ☐ Metzeler |
| 3 ☐ Cheng Shin | 9 ☐ Michelin |
| 4 ☐ Continental | 0 ☐ Pirelli |
| 5 ☐ Dunlop | x ☐ Other |
| 6 ☐ IRC | |

40. Is it a stock or an aftermarket tire?

- | |
|--|
| 17-1 ☐ Stock (came on bike) |
| 2 ☐ Aftermarket |

41. What brand of rear tire is on your most current streetbike?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 18-1 ☐ Avon | 7 ☐ Maxxis |
| 2 ☐ Bridgestone | 8 ☐ Metzeler |
| 3 ☐ Cheng Shin | 9 ☐ Michelin |
| 4 ☐ Continental | 0 ☐ Pirelli |
| 5 ☐ Dunlop | x ☐ Other |
| 6 ☐ IRC | |

42. Is it a stock or an aftermarket tire?

- | |
|--|
| 19-1 ☐ Stock (came on bike) |
| 2 ☐ Aftermarket |

43. What brand of tire (front or rear) do you plan to purchase next?

- 20-1 ☐ Avon 7 ☐ Maxxis
2 ☐ Bridgestone 8 ☐ Metzeler
3 ☐ Cheng Shin 9 ☐ Michelin
4 ☐ Continental 0 ☐ Pirelli
5 ☐ Dunlop x ☐ Other
6 ☐ IRC

44. On average, how many street motorcycle tires do you buy per year?

- 21-1 ☐ One 4 ☐ Four
2 ☐ Two 5 ☐ Five
3 ☐ Three 6 ☐ Six or more

45. What type of tires do you buy most often?

- 22-1 ☐ Performance 4 ☐ Standard/OEM replacement
2 ☐ Touring
3 ☐ Economy

46. On average, how many quarts of four-stroke oil do you purchase per month?

_____ quarts (23-24)

47. Do you buy motorcycle-specific oil?

- 25-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

48. How often do you wear a helmet while street riding?

- 26-1 ☐ All the time 3 ☐ Once in a while
2 ☐ Most of the time 4 ☐ Never

49. What brand of helmet have you purchased most recently?

- 27-1 ☐ AGV 28-1 ☐ Lazer
2 ☐ Arai 2 ☐ MDS
3 ☐ Bell 3 ☐ Monarch
4 ☐ Bieffe 4 ☐ Nolan
5 ☐ Boeri 5 ☐ Shoei
6 ☐ FM 6 ☐ Suomy
7 ☐ Fulmer 7 ☐ THH
8 ☐ Griffin 8 ☐ Vetter
9 ☐ HJC 9 ☐ Other
0 ☐ Kiwi

50. If you were planning to buy a new helmet now, what brand would it be?

- 29-1 ☐ AGV 30-1 ☐ Lazer
2 ☐ Arai 2 ☐ MDS
3 ☐ Bell 3 ☐ Monarch
4 ☐ Bieffe 4 ☐ Nolan
5 ☐ Boeri 5 ☐ Shoei
6 ☐ FM 6 ☐ Suomy
7 ☐ Fulmer 7 ☐ THH
8 ☐ Griffin 8 ☐ Vetter
9 ☐ HJC 9 ☐ Other
0 ☐ Kiwi 0 ☐ Don't know

51. Which of the other following items do you usually wear while riding?

- 31-1 ☐ Boots
2 ☐ Gloves
3 ☐ Chaps
4 ☐ Leather jacket
5 ☐ Leather pants
6 ☐ Full leather suit
7 ☐ High-performance nylon suit/jacket
8 ☐ Other type of riding suit

52. What brand of protective apparel (jacket, pants or riding suit) have you purchased most recently?

- 32-1 ☐ Aerostich 33-1 ☐ Lockhart
2 ☐ AGV 2 ☐ Marsee
3 ☐ Bates 3 ☐ Motoport
4 ☐ Brooks 4 ☐ Protech
5 ☐ Dainese 5 ☐ Roadgear
6 ☐ Fieldsheer 6 ☐ Schott
7 ☐ Firstgear 7 ☐ Streetline
8 ☐ Harley 8 ☐ Teknic
MotorClothes 9 ☐ Vanson
9 ☐ Hein Gericke 0 ☐ Vetter
0 ☐ Hondaline x ☐ Z Custom
x ☐ Joe Rocket y ☐ Other
y ☐ Kushitani

53. Which of the following apparel items do you plan to buy in the next 12 months?

- 34-1 ☐ Boots 8 ☐ Other riding suit
2 ☐ Leather jacket 9 ☐ Light gloves
3 ☐ Helmet 0 ☐ Winter gloves
4 ☐ Chaps x ☐ Casual apparel
5 ☐ Full Leathers (motorcycle-related)
6 ☐ Rainsuit y ☐ None of these
7 ☐ High-Performance nylon suit/jacket

54. Which of the following maintenance/performance items do you plan to buy in the next 12 months?

- 35-1 ☐ Air filter 9 ☐ Motorcycle-specific oil
2 ☐ Battery 0 ☐ Oil filter
3 ☐ Brake pads x ☐ Spark plugs
4 ☐ Carburetors or jetting 36-1 ☐ Suspension components
5 ☐ Chain 2 ☐ Tires
6 ☐ Chain lube 3 ☐ Wax/polish
7 ☐ Cleaning solutions 4 ☐ Wheels
8 ☐ Exhaust system 5 ☐ Other

55. Which of the following accessories do you plan to buy in the next 12 months?

- 37-1 ☐ Alarm 7 ☐ Custom seat
2 ☐ Audio 8 ☐ Fairing or windshield components
3 ☐ Backrest 38-1 ☐ GPS
4 ☐ Bike cover 2 ☐ Luggage (hard)
5 ☐ Bike lock 3 ☐ Luggage (soft)
6 ☐ Chrome/other appearance items 4 ☐ Radar detector
5 ☐ Other accessories

56. What brand of spark plug do you plan to purchase next?

- 39-1 ☐ Autolite 5 ☐ NGK
2 ☐ Bosch 6 ☐ SplitFire
3 ☐ Champion 7 ☐ Other
4 ☐ ND (Nippodenso) 8 ☐ Don't know

57. What brand of brake pads do you plan to purchase next?

- 40-1 ☐ Bendix 7 ☐ SBS
2 ☐ Braking 8 ☐ Stock/OEM
3 ☐ Dunlop 9 ☐ Vesrah
4 ☐ EBC 0 ☐ Other
5 ☐ Ferodo x ☐ Don't know
6 ☐ Galfer

58. What brand of exhaust pipe do you currently have on your bike?

- 41-1 ☐ Akrapovic 42-1 ☐ Muzzys
2 ☐ Cobra 2 ☐ Sudco
3 ☐ D&D 3 ☐ Supertrapp
4 ☐ Erion Racing 4 ☐ Two Brothers
5 ☐ Jardine 5 ☐ Vance & Hines
6 ☐ Kerker 6 ☐ Yoshimura
7 ☐ M4 7 ☐ Stock
8 ☐ Micron 8 ☐ None

59. What brand of exhaust pipe are you planning on purchasing in the next 12 months?

- 43-1 ☐ Akrapovic 44-1 ☐ Muzzys
2 ☐ Cobra 2 ☐ Sudco
3 ☐ D&D 3 ☐ Supertrapp
4 ☐ Erion Racing 4 ☐ Two Brothers
5 ☐ Jardine 5 ☐ Vance & Hines
6 ☐ Kerker 6 ☐ Yoshimura
7 ☐ M4 7 ☐ Stock
8 ☐ Micron 8 ☐ None

TRUCK OWNERSHIP

60. Do you or does anyone in your household own a pickup truck?

- 45-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No (if no, skip to Question 65)

If you own more than one pickup truck, please refer to your most recently acquired truck to answer Questions 61-64.

61. Is it a full-size or compact truck?

- 46-1 ☐ Full-size 2 ☐ Compact

62. Is it a 4x4?

- 47-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

63. Is your truck an import or domestic make?

- 48-1 ☐ Import 2 ☐ Domestic

64. Which of the following options or accessories have you purchased for your truck?

- 49-1 ☐ Custom wheels/tires
2 ☐ Aftermarket stereo equipment
3 ☐ Bed extender
4 ☐ Bed liner
5 ☐ None of these

65. Do you or does anyone in your household own a sport/utility vehicle?

- 50-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

66. Do you or does anyone in your household plan to buy a new truck or sport/utility vehicle in the next 12 months?

- 51-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

67. Which of the following activities did you personally participate in during the past 12 months? Please check all that apply.

- 52-1 ☐ Attended racing event
2 ☐ ATV riding
3 ☐ Backpacking/Hiking
4 ☐ Bicycling
5 ☐ Boating
6 ☐ Camping
7 ☐ Canoeing/Kayaking
8 ☐ Fishing
9 ☐ Hunting
0 ☐ In-line skating
53-1 ☐ Outdoor cooking
2 ☐ Personal watercrafting
3 ☐ Photography
4 ☐ Rock climbing
5 ☐ Running/Jogging
6 ☐ Skateboarding
7 ☐ Snow skiing
8 ☐ Snowboarding
9 ☐ Snowmobiling
0 ☐ Surfing
54-1 ☐ Swimming
2 ☐ Track days
3 ☐ Used video camera
4 ☐ Weight lifting
5 ☐ Whitewater rafting
6 ☐ Windsurfing
7 ☐ Worked in home workshop
8 ☐ Other
9 ☐ None of these

68. Do you watch motorcycle programs on TV?

- 55-1 ☐ Regularly 3 ☐ Rarely
2 ☐ Occasionally 4 ☐ Never

69. Are you interested in motorcycle vacation tours?

- 56-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

70. Do you own a home computer (PC)?

- 57-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

71. If yes, do you access the Internet or the World Wide Web?

- 58-1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

72. If yes, what three Web sites do you visit most?

- _____

(59)
(60)
(61)

73. What three motorcycle-related Web sites do you visit most?

- _____

(62)
(63)
(64)

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD

A. Are you male or female?

- 65-1 ☐ Male 2 ☐ Female

B. What is your marital status?

- 66-1 ☐ Married
2 ☐ Single (never married)
3 ☐ Other (separated/divorced/widowed)

C. What is your age?

- 67-1 ☐ Under 13 7 ☐ 35-39
2 ☐ 13-17 8 ☐ 40-44
3 ☐ 18-20 9 ☐ 45-49
4 ☐ 21-24 0 ☐ 50-54
5 ☐ 25-29 x ☐ 55-59
6 ☐ 30-34 y ☐ 60 or over

D. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 68-1 ☐ Grade school
2 ☐ Attended/attending high school
3 ☐ Graduated high school
4 ☐ Attended/attending college 1-3 years
5 ☐ Graduated from four-year college
6 ☐ Postgraduate study or degree

E. What was your household's total income, before taxes, in 1999? Be sure to include income from all household members and from all sources, such as salaries, bonuses, interest, dividends, etc.

- 69-1 ☐ Under \$10,000 6 ☐ \$30,000-\$34,999
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3 ☐ \$15,000-\$19,999 8 ☐ \$50,000-\$74,999
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80-2

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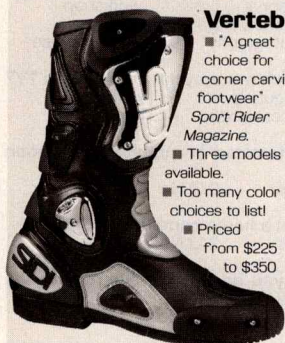
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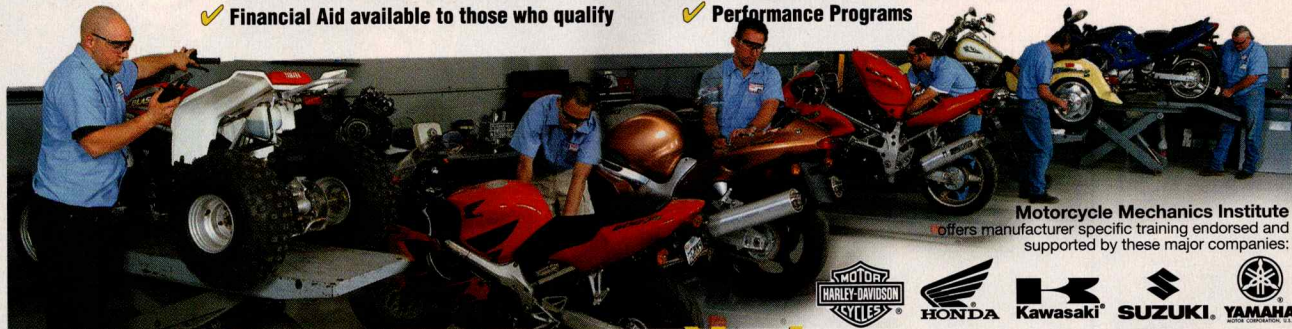
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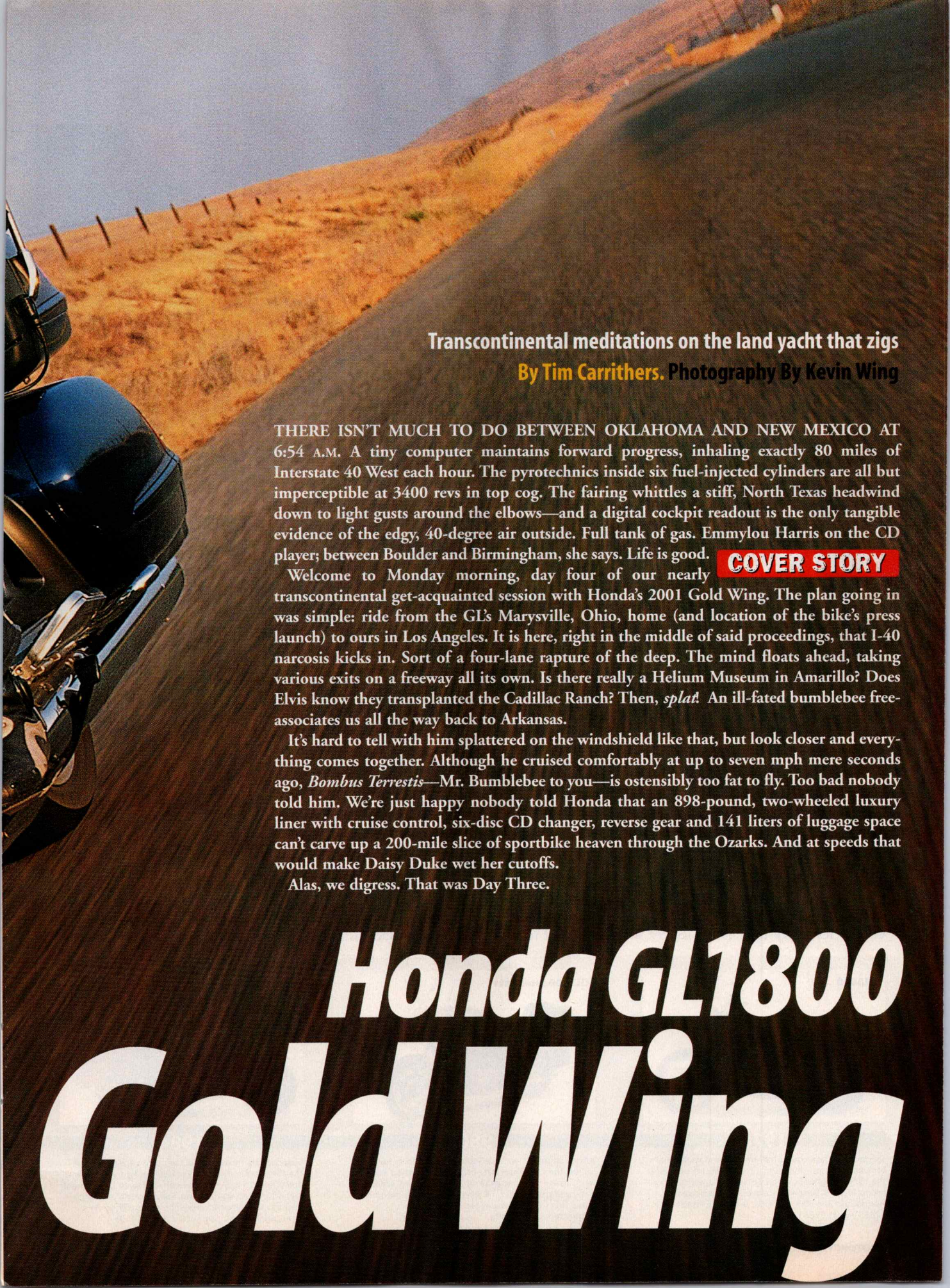
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Transcontinental meditations on the land yacht that zigs

By Tim Carrithers. Photography By Kevin Wing

THERE ISN'T MUCH TO DO BETWEEN OKLAHOMA AND NEW MEXICO AT 6:54 A.M. A tiny computer maintains forward progress, inhaling exactly 80 miles of Interstate 40 West each hour. The pyrotechnics inside six fuel-injected cylinders are all but imperceptible at 3400 revs in top cog. The fairing whittles a stiff, North Texas headwind down to light gusts around the elbows—and a digital cockpit readout is the only tangible evidence of the edgy, 40-degree air outside. Full tank of gas. Emmylou Harris on the CD player; between Boulder and Birmingham, she says. Life is good.

COVER STORY

Welcome to Monday morning, day four of our nearly transcontinental get-acquainted session with Honda's 2001 Gold Wing. The plan going in was simple: ride from the GL's Marysville, Ohio, home (and location of the bike's press launch) to ours in Los Angeles. It is here, right in the middle of said proceedings, that I-40 narcosis kicks in. Sort of a four-lane rapture of the deep. The mind floats ahead, taking various exits on a freeway all its own. Is there really a Helium Museum in Amarillo? Does Elvis know they transplanted the Cadillac Ranch? Then, *splat!* An ill-fated bumblebee free-associates us all the way back to Arkansas.

It's hard to tell with him splattered on the windshield like that, but look closer and everything comes together. Although he cruised comfortably at up to seven mph mere seconds ago, *Bombus Terrestis*—Mr. Bumblebee to you—is ostensibly too fat to fly. Too bad nobody told him. We're just happy nobody told Honda that an 898-pound, two-wheeled luxury liner with cruise control, six-disc CD changer, reverse gear and 141 liters of luggage space can't carve up a 200-mile slice of sportbike heaven through the Ozarks. And at speeds that would make Daisy Duke wet her cutoffs.

Alas, we digress. That was Day Three.

Honda GL1800 Gold Wing



DAY ONE begins suitably at the crack of noon, loading our pearl-blue GL1800 with enough foul-weather paraphernalia to survive 2800 miles of anything the Weather Channel can spit out. First impressions? Popping the trunk lid from across the lot with a button on the key fob is astoundingly convenient when your hands are full—even if it does scare the hell out of the janitorial staff. And you can lock everything with another button when you're done, and even honk the horn. That really scares 'em. Still, anybody who's ever packed a GL1500 will find less room to stuff stuff in the 1800's bags. (Mental note: Look for motels with a washer/dryer.)

OK, so it's pricey (\$17,499; \$18,499 with ABS), and its nifty

pop-up compartment in the trunk floor—which houses the optional six-disc CD changer—eats five liters of cargo room; still, the CD player contributes immeasurably more to cross-country bliss than wool socks, Powerbars or whatever else you might cram in there. Take a stroll around the grounds and take in the architecture. The 2001 Wing is outwardly smaller than its immediate predecessor, with a fluid, organic silhouette that makes the straight-laced GL1500 look like an extra from *American Gothic*. From hand controls and switchgear to the Acurasque dash layout, everything you push, pull, turn or read is intuitive, displaying Honda's characteristically excellent attention to ergonomic detail.

GL1000



1975

The face that launched a half-million land yachts was built as a forward-thinking cruise missile. Introduced at the 1974 Cologne show, the GL1000 hit American showrooms in 1975. Despite decent engine performance, Honda sold just 5000 GLs that year. Suggested retail: \$2899 (west), \$2881 (east).

GL1100 Interstate



1980

Although the GL was available in naked form for \$3798, the 1980 Interstate attracted attention as the first Japanese tourer available with a fairing, saddlebags and trunk standard. Air suspension at both ends was a first in 1980, as was electronic ignition. Suggested retail: \$4898.

GL1200 Interstate



1984

Surprised by Yamaha's 1983 Venture V4, Honda gave the third-generation, 1182cc flat four hydraulic lifters and a new 16-inch front wheel—followed by a 15-inch rear—to speed up handling. Still, it wasn't enough, because the Venture waxed the stodgy Wing (in all ways) again in '84. Suggested retail: \$6195.



The GL1800 cockpit is a half-inch narrower than those of its ancestors, and is much easier on the eyes. The left-hand switch pod's audio controls are an ergonomic miracle. A single button in the right-hand pod, next to the cruise controls, cues the electric reverse gear. Upper dash vents, however, admit very little air.



Thanks to some crafty antishock countermeasures, the optional Panasonic CD changer (\$1092) hiding in the trunk never skipped a beat in nearly 3000 miles of cross-country hammering. Loading discs is much easier than the old magazine system BMW uses on its K1200LT, but you'll have to unload the trunk to cue up fresh discs.



Release an under-trunk latch and hydraulic struts make sure the saddlebags open smoothly. Honda claims 40 liters of capacity per side, though we found less usable space than on the GL1500's bags. Fit and finish of the bags were good, though they occasionally require a determined fist to close.

Loading a half-dozen CDs, the 25-watt Panasonic audio system pumps anything from Ludwig van Beethoven to Stevie Ray Vaughn with enough accurate punch to shame some home systems and wake up the neighbors. Although sound quality deteriorates as you approach freeway speeds, the only vehicles with higher fidelity have four wheels and a roof. To anyone climbing off a sportbike, the GL1800 cockpit initially impersonates an F-18's, but don't panic. Audio controls are equally common-sensical, as are those for the CB, cruise control, rear suspension and headlight angle. Now get on the thing.

Although Honda's published saddle height for the 1800 remains

at the GL1500's 29.1 inches, once you're aboard, the new bike's seat accommodates a broader range of riders. Miss Five-foot-five gets a firm footing at a stop, and Mr. Six-foot-four has abundant legroom on the road. Still, the riding position is arguably sit-up-and-beg; riders are right up against the bar ends, not bad for shorter folks, but a touch cramped for those taller than average.

If the GL1800 feels lighter than the previous six, it's because it is. At 898 pounds complete with a full 6.6-gallon fuel payload and eight pounds of optional ABS braking hardware, the 1800 is still 13 pounds lighter than our 1999 GL1500SE. Reduced frontal area contributes to the improved aerodynamics and that smaller feel. However, most of the perceived compactness comes from moving the rider two inches closer to the steering axis (which somewhat explains the close-cropped riding position). Every aspect of riding the motorcycle thus becomes more direct, more exact, and for us at least, much more fun than anything with a Gold Wing badge has ever been.



1985

Slow sales killed the naked Wing for 1985. These were the '80s, and too much was just right. Enter the GL1200 Limited Edition, powered by a fuel-injected 1182cc flat four with self-leveling suspension, a four-speaker audio/intercom system and an electronic trip computer. Suggested retail: \$10,000.



1988

Honda's 1520cc six instantly reduced luxury motorcycle touring to a class of one. From supreme air management and seat comfort to power and handling, nothing on two wheels was even in the same ZIP code. It was also the first motorcycle you could put in reverse. Suggested retail: \$9998.



2001

Just when it seemed the Wing had gone soft enough to give BMW's sporty K1200LT a shot, Honda counters with an 898-pound GL1800 that out-torques anything on two wheels and out-handles anything with saddlebags. Suggested retail: \$17,499.

Lord of the Wings

Recasting an American icon in a sportier direction

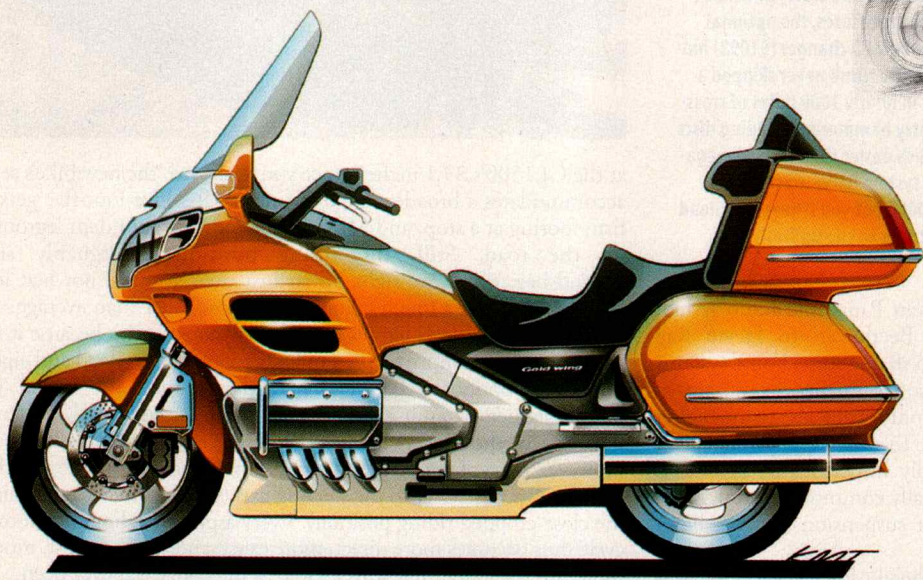
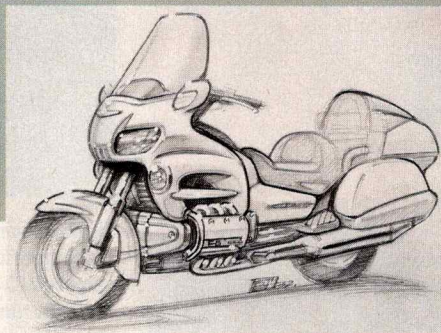
IT'S 1993. YOU'RE IN A ROOM FULL OF Honda heavyweights, deciding who gets to head the new-generation Gold Wing project. Let's see... the single most profitable model in the Honda lineup, a half-million copies in circulation since its 1975 unveiling, the two-wheeled Honda flagship.... No pressure there. So who gets the job? Masanori Aoki, large-project leader for the NSR250R at just 33 years old—Honda's youngest LPL ever. Check his resumé. The CBR250RR was his, plus the CBR400RR and the CBR600F3. It's perfect. He's a sportbike guy.

A sportbike guy? What sort of corporate nonsequitur is that? Maybe the same kind that took Honda Motor Company from a one-man show to a household word in any language you can name. It all makes

"First I had to learn English," Aoki says. "I lived in the United States from 1993 to 1996. During that time I had to learn how people were enjoying the Gold Wing. I went to many rallies—Wing Ding, Honda's Homecoming and Hoot, Americade, and Sturgis. Basically, I went everywhere." Aoki's *everywhere* included ZIP codes lucid tourists fear to tread, like the 2200 miles between Anchorage, Alaska and Seattle, Washington, where he learned many things. "It's a long way between gas stations out

"We set out to keep 80 percent of the [current] Gold Wing's touring capability," Aoki says. "That's a vital foundation. My job is to add more fun factor, to build a Gold Wing with the kind of acceleration and handling people normally associate with motorcycles. Even the sound is important," he says. "It's another reason you ride a motorcycle instead of driving a car. The GL1500 engine has an electric motor feel to it. Good power and torque, very linear, but it signs off too early in the rev range. I

Right: The new Wing began as a concept pencil sketch. After hundreds of more detailed design sketches, Aoki's team settled on this mechanical design (below), using minimal bodywork to pull your eye to the sexy mechanical cleavage of the engine and frame. This sketch beat two others; a conservative design closest to the existing GL1500, and an integrated design, using more bodywork to cover exposed mechanicals.



sense, really. The Gold Wing, as it transitioned through 1000, 1100, 1200 and, finally, 1500cc iterations, had become bigger, heavier and a lot more ponderous—and a lot less fun for anyone with a trace of sporty-bike DNA. Gold Wings were for the chronologically challenged, and since Honda's new flagship couldn't become the harbinger of Sansabelt slacks yet to come, 1990s-style luxury was out. Performance was in, and Aoki-San would be the man to redefine it—just as soon as he figured this whole touring thing out.

there," he says. "Our original target for the new Gold Wing was 234 miles on one tankful, but we ultimately got more than that."

In focus-group research beginning in 1994, Honda heard America's long-distance motorcyclists order the same thing in different ways: more performance. Just as American luxury cars had morphed from 1980s land yachts to 2000 cruise missiles such as Cadillac's 141-mph Seville STS, Aoki-San knew his new GL had to be lively, yet maintain the tradition of first-class comfort.

wanted more character, more excitement." He wasn't waiting around to get it, either.

Returning to Japan on February 1, 1996, Aoki and one of the largest development teams in Honda history went to work on what would be the 2001 Gold Wing. In February of 1997, the first of four top-level engineering forums decided basic chassis and ergonomic dimensions. As it turns out, fundamental engine configuration was determined in 1975.

"The Gold Wing is the flat cylinder design," Aoki insists. After testing the

signature, horizontally opposed layout in four-, six- and eight-cylinder denominations, the six won going away. Juggling incompatible dynamics such as exhaust emissions, noise, weight, fuel mileage, horsepower, torque and driveability made finding the magic engine size difficult. Testing on American roads, Aoki's team started with a 1657cc mutation of the existing 1520cc six. After dissecting everything from the current 1500 to a two-liter beast, input from American riders on American roads finally set the 2001 six's displacement at 1832cc. And because the new engine would be a stressed chassis member (no rubber mounts to squelch vibration), attaining Gold Wing smoothness meant moving

beyond the flat six's theoretically perfect primary and secondary balance factors. For starters, that meant scrutinizing the balance factor of any engine bit that spins to cut high-load harmonic tremors.

Given the new bike's more sporting mission and Honda's familiarity with nonferrous skeletal systems, even greeters at Wal-Mart predicted an aluminum-framed Gold Wing months ago. Meanwhile, Aoki and company set chassis numbers such as wheelbase and steering geometry in January of 1998. Ponder the dynamics involved in sporting around on 792 pounds of motorcycle (plus fuel, two people, personal effects and that full-scale stuffed Alf on the trunk) and the strategic advantages of aluminum make even more sense here than on a CBR600F4. Just ask Aoki-San.

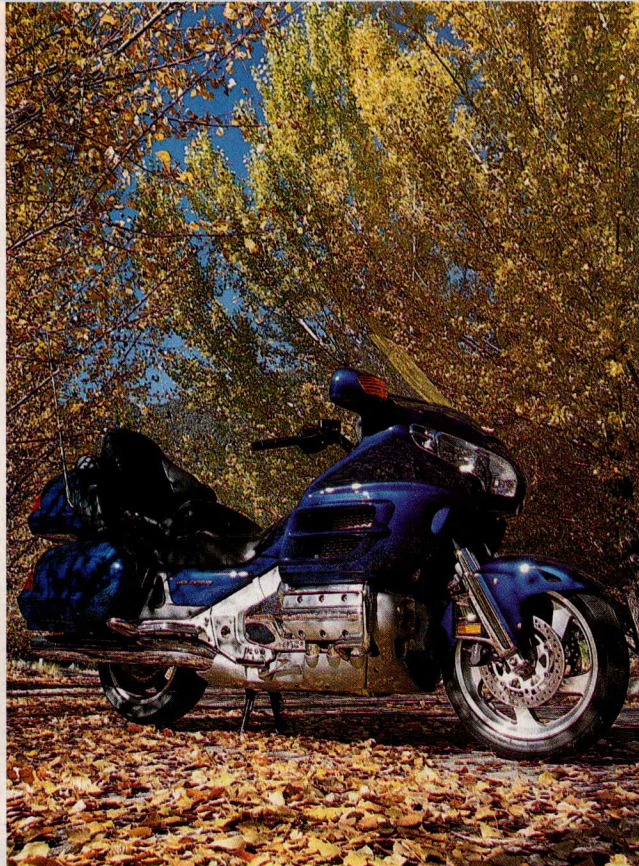
"The new Gold Wing's higher dynamic performance levels demand more of key structures such as the frame and swingarm," he says. "Those demands and limited space made the internal frame shapes very complex." That complexity delivered a claimed 119 percent more lateral rigidity and 77 percent more torsional stiffness than the GL1500's

steel-pipe chassis, and weighs 25 pounds less. Credit the single-sided Pro-Arm swingarm for much of that, and for making rear tire changes radically easier when the time comes. What's more, because each part of the aluminum frame can handle several roles, there are just 31 components in the dual-spar GL1800 frame—compared with 130 pieces of steel in a GL1500 skeleton.

From an antidive system that works in concert with Honda's

sketches, and in October of 1997 they had a winner. Adding an unprecedented extra step to the design process, both Honda Research America and Honda R&D Japan rendered a 1/8-scale clay model from that final sketch. In February of 1998, an internal design challenge commissioned one life-size mockup incorporating the best facets of both designs.

Meshing those powerful new ideas with adaptations of established ones, Aoki constantly looked for relationships connecting seemingly independent systems. "By moving the rider into the pocket of neutral air behind the fairing," he says, "we were able to design a smaller fairing with 10 percent less aerodynamic drag. Moving the rider forward also creates an additional two inches of seating room for Gold Wing passengers." Moving the rider forward meant moving the engine ahead too, which helps handling. Finding room for the rider's feet and legs meant clipping the bottom-



Proud papa: Gold Wing large-project leader Masanori Aoki.



Creating one-eighth-scale clay models before a final life-size version added a radical step to the design process. This design didn't make the final cut.

Linked Braking System (and available antilock brakes) to an electrically adjustable shock-spring preload system and a new drive shaft damper, there are 36 newly patented technologies inside this thing.

Although every contour of the new design was calculated to communicate the strength beneath, the bike still had to look like a Gold Wing. According to American Honda's Gary Christopher, focus-group feedback helped outline a bike with less bodywork to play up the new hardware. People wanted a more athletic Gold Wing, wanted it to look the part. "If the bike was lighter," says Christopher, "it should look lighter." Honda designers on both sides of the Pacific generated more than 100 prospective design

rear corner from each cylinder bank, but doing that required a new parallel valve train that puts 32,000 miles between adjustments.

Seven years of orchestrating thousands of potentially discordant details into one harmonious piece may have taken its toll on Aoki-San. If it did, you won't see any evidence when he laughs like the kid who just discovered you can launch flaming strawberry Pop-Tarts across the kitchen by pinning them in the toaster (don't try that at home!), or when he does an *a cappella* version of The Monkees' *Daydream Believer*. After burning seven years of midnight oil on this thing, the bottom line is simple. "I just hope people like the bike," he says. —T.C.

Turn the key and a wiry version of the illustrious Gold Wing Eagle materializes in the cockpit's central LCD display in what Honda calls the "opening ceremony." That little number goes from cute to annoying to switched off before we leave the lot. The engine boots up with the instant precision associated with Honda fuel injection, settling into an edgier rendition of the familiar GL idle. Honda's flat six has always been receptive, but this one wants to go. Now.

Slipping into traffic, that responsiveness—especially right off idle—triggers a twinge of driveline lash in low gear; the softish fork amplifies any unsmooth throttle antics during takeoffs and slower riding. Shifting during slower speed work felt a touch notchy, too, though things smoothed nicely once the miles added up. Once under way, you know you're aboard a Gold Wing; the gear-whine of the flat-six engine, the seemingly unalterable straight-line stability, the calmness behind the fairing.

From there, the experience is all new: no more disconnected, high-anxiety Steamboat Willie urban choreography. The 1800 turns when and where it's told, with a direct—dare we say *sporty*—feel. New suspension bits are tuned to match. With the single rear shock set to the 15th of 25 electrically adjustable spring-preload positions (via a push-button system that includes a two-position memory), the ride is a bit taught relative to the GL1500's anesthetized feel.

With an even 100 foot-pounds of torque on tap at a mere 2250 rpm, the big six yanks harder down low than even Suzuki's Hayabusa (which manages 99.0 foot-pounds at its 6750 rpm peak). The two-wheel Torque King GL finally peaks with an imposing 109.9 foot-pounds at 4250 rpm. That sort of grunt lets it pull smoothly from 35 mph to an indicated 135 in top gear. But enough of this. That's Interstate 71. This is the throttle. Twist it,

Our 2001 GL is quicker to 60 and through the quarter-mile than a Lamborghini Diablo VT.

continued on page 43

Wing Tech

A peek beneath the plastic of Honda's new GL

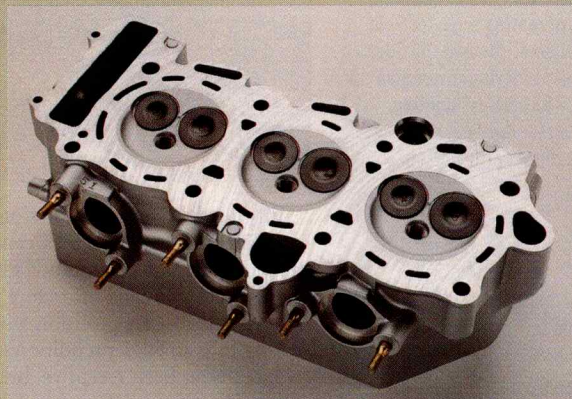
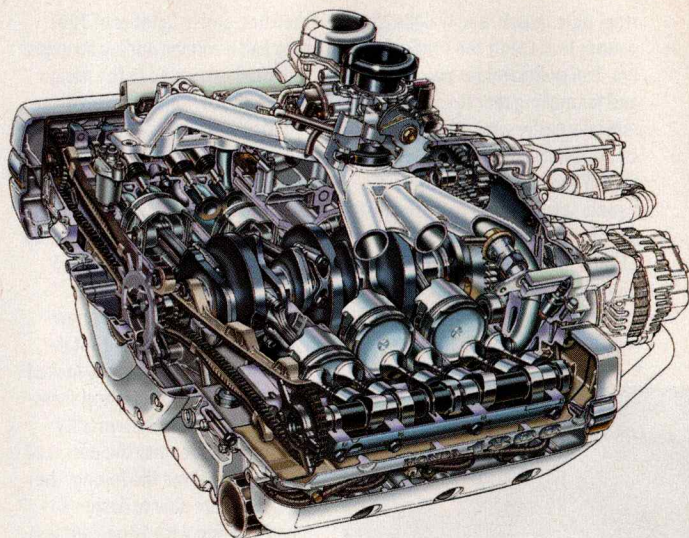
A FEW HUNDRED MILES WILL PROVE Honda's new Gold Wing is more than the sum of its parts, but it takes an added critical look to discover how much more. Stroll around the world's largest production motorcycle engine for a bit and do the math.

Its 1832 cubic centimeters are divided among six cylinders, fed by two 40mm throttle bodies packing six 50-psi Keihin fuel injectors, two digital fuel-injection maps and an ignition map for each cylinder. Then there's the obligatory army of acronyms; from LBS (linked braking system) to ABS (antilock braking system) to RACV (Rotary Air Control Valve, which optimizes idle speed under all manner of conditions). A staggeringly powerful 1100-watt alternator pays the electric bill run up by six microprocessors, four 55-watt headlight bulbs, two 35-watt driving lights, electric reverse gear, plus a quartet of 25-watt stereo speakers—the business end of an AM/FM/CD sound system, replete with six-disc changer. Moreover, we haven't even talked about the first aluminum spar skeleton ever fitted to a touring rig, or the remote-control trunk lid....

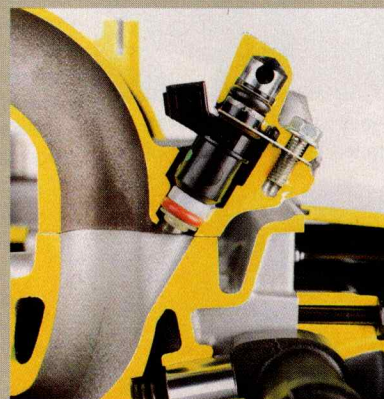
All that adds up to grand total of part numbers that, were it ever made public, could trigger a firestorm of lawyer-to-lawyer cell-

phone calls that would bring play at golf courses across America to a grinding halt. But this much we know. Add up all the separate part numbers in a new Honda Civic and subtract 12. That's what goes into every 2001 Gold Wing.

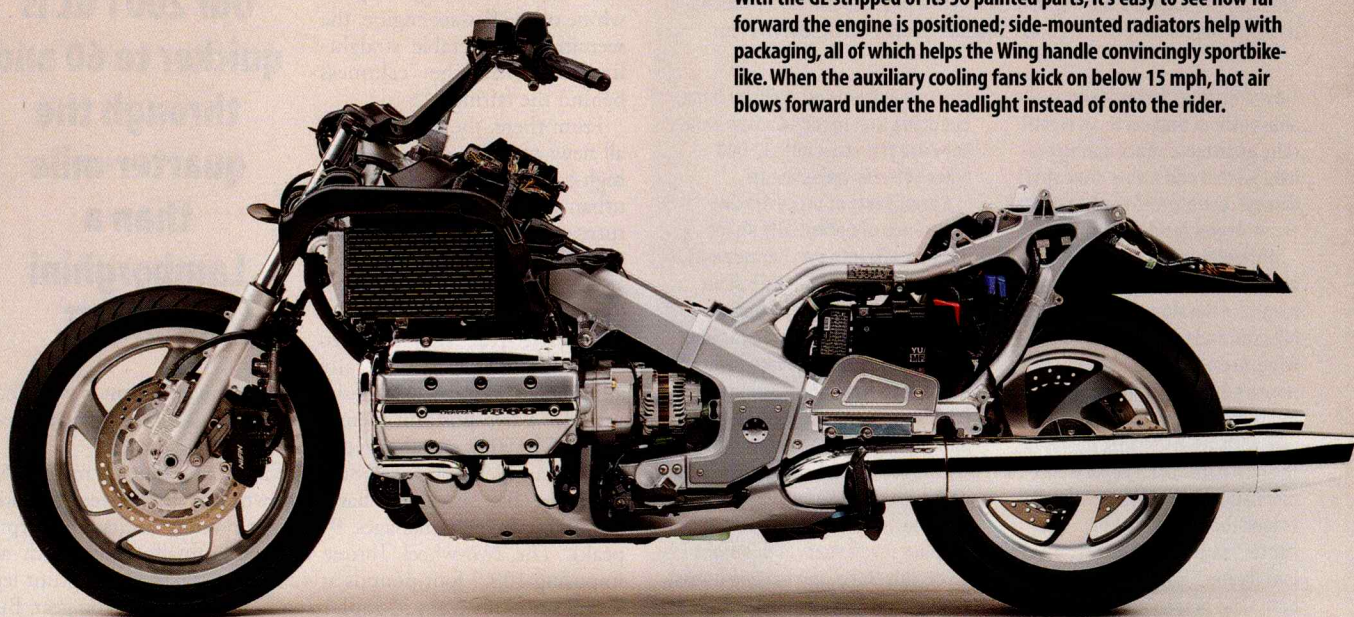
Despite 20 percent more displacement and 23 percent more horsepower, the GL1800's six (right) is 2.5 pounds lighter than its ancestors. Putting the water pump aft of the engine cuts warm-up time, and nickel/alloy crank bearings cut noise.



New parallel-valve layout puts intake and exhaust valves on the same axis in each cylinder, just above a single spark plug. Shim-under-bucket actuation means chains now spin the cams. Intake flow through 28mm runners (vs. 25.5 in the 1500) consists only of air between the two 40mm throttle bodies and each cylinder's 50-psi Keihin injector.



With the GL stripped of its 36 painted parts, it's easy to see how far forward the engine is positioned; side-mounted radiators help with packaging, all of which helps the Wing handle convincingly sportbike-like. When the auxiliary cooling fans kick on below 15 mph, hot air blows forward under the headlight instead of onto the rider.





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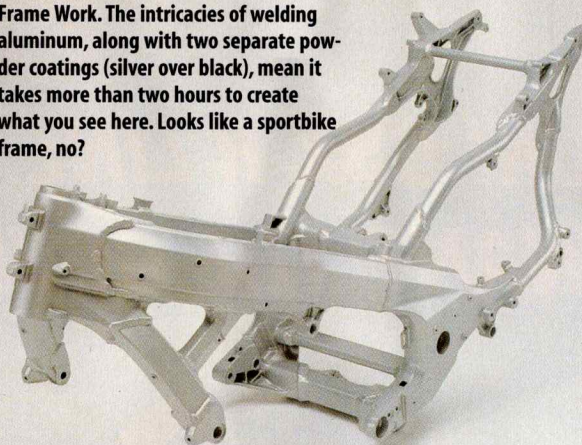
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for a local office near you.**

Detach and keep in your wallet



Rear preload is hydraulically adjustable from this cockpit panel, which includes two presets that recall your favorite settings. That dial on the left moves the headlight array through 2.5 degrees of vertical adjustment.

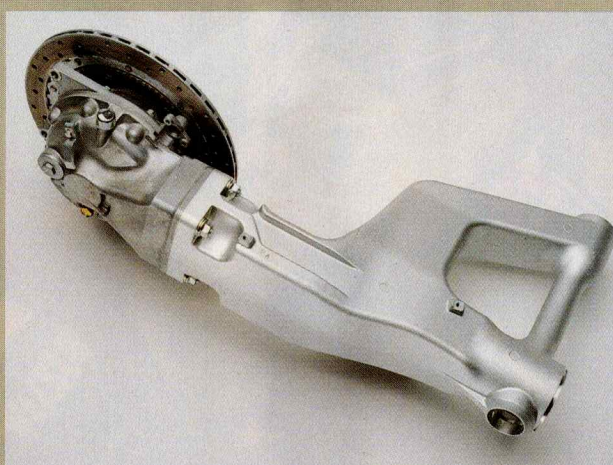
Frame Work. The intricacies of welding aluminum, along with two separate powder coatings (silver over black), mean it takes more than two hours to create what you see here. Looks like a sportbike frame, no?



Antitive hardware on the left fork tube uses pressure generated in the secondary LBS master cylinder and is activated by the brake lever or pedal. It all works superbly.

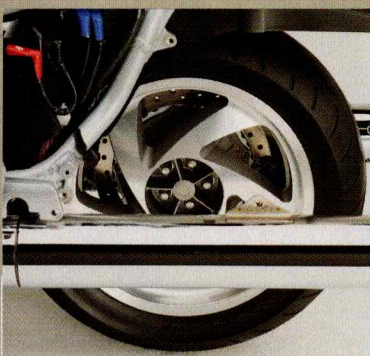


Synergy in action. New parallel valves allowed engineers to lop off the rear corner of each head, creating enough foot room to scoot the rider forward two inches to further improve handling.



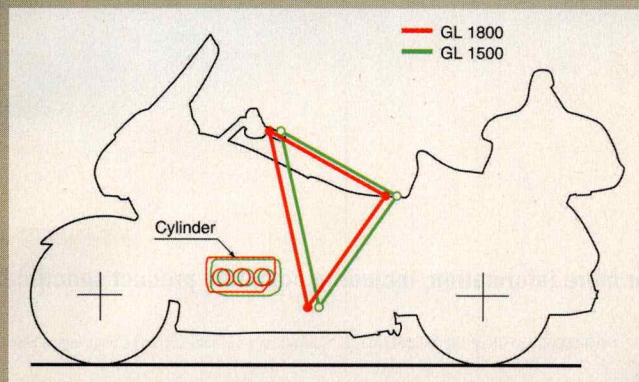
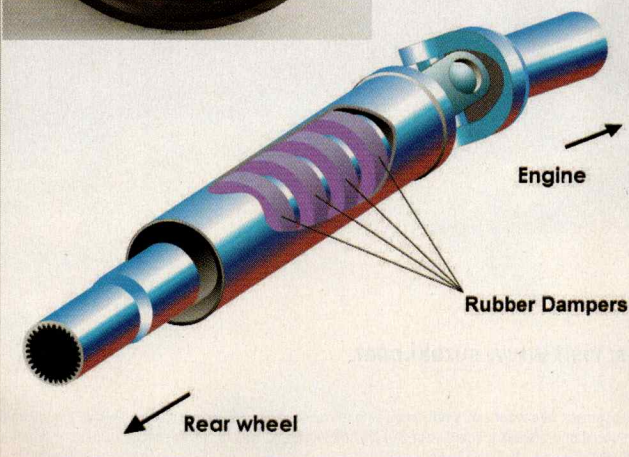
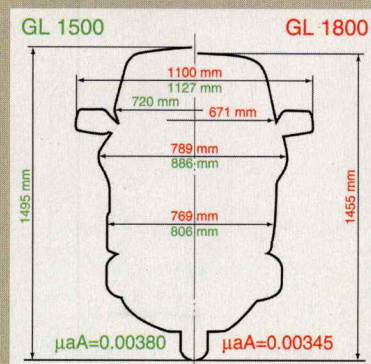
The 6.6-gallon polypropylene fuel tank also carries the electric fuel pump that pressurizes the fuel-injection system to the requisite 50 psi.

Left: The single-sided aluminum swingarm creates a significant amount of the Wing's handling prowess. Controlled by a single rear shock, it also houses the new drive shaft.



Left and below: Two concentric rubber sleeves connected by a rubber bushing soak up driveline shock, eliminating the complicated cush-drive hub. Factor in the single-sided swingarm and rear-wheel removal is now a simple, five-bolt job.

Right and below: The oncoming bug's eye view shows 10 percent less frontal area than the previous GL. The new bike is 10mm narrower, but maintains the same overall height. Wheelbase is virtually identical, but overall length gains 20mm. Moving the rider forward gives passengers two extra inches of space.



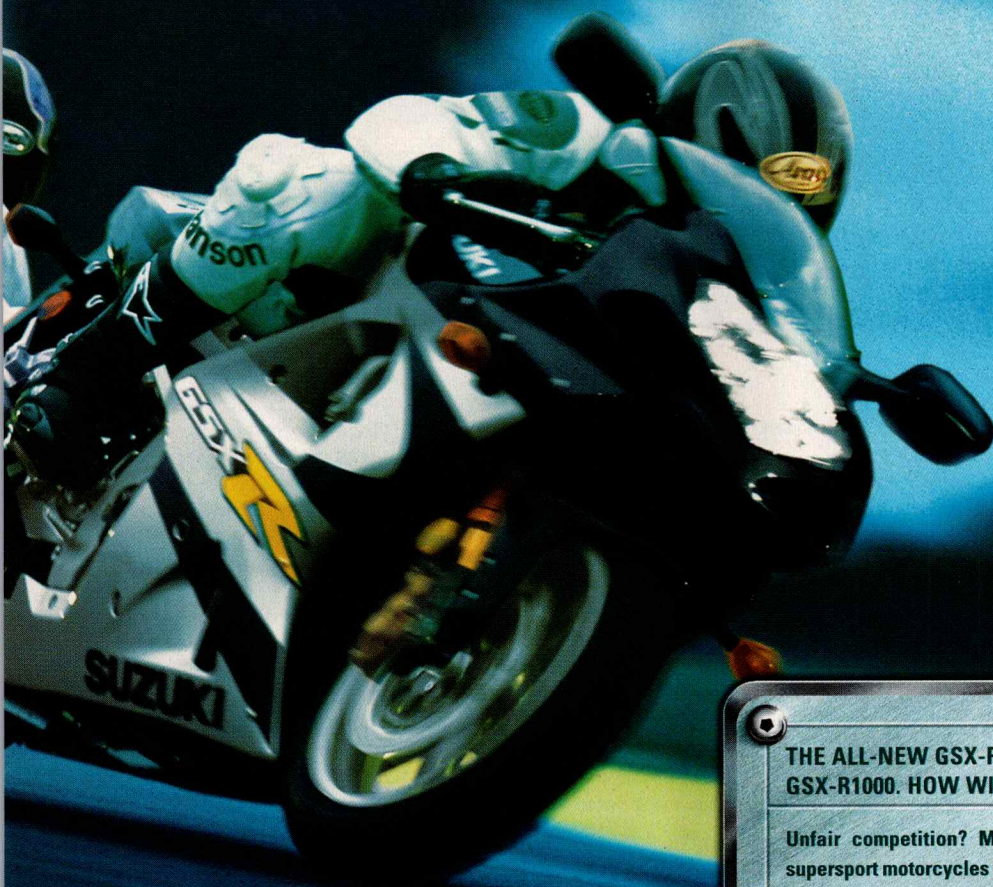
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Champagne Dreams

BMW's luxu-boat takes on Honda's new GL

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO WE PITTED BMW's then-new K1200LT against the aging Gold Wing and the BMW won. Then, we said a new GL was on the way—suggesting it could be a 2000cc V-8, of all things—that might vanquish the hotshot Beemer.

Welcome to the future as we knew it, only the Gold Wing is 1800cc of flat-six and the Beemer is the same as it ever was. Now we ask: Does the GL reclaim the crown?

First a reality check. We called around and confirmed our suspicions that the BMW and the Honda are not actively cross-shopped. We found that the Gold Wing buyer is intensely loyal to the model and that riders stepping up to the big K-bike are likely to be coming from other BMWs, but may also be considering the LT against a Harley. *Really.*

BMW attempted a truly futuristic motorcycle with the LT, one in which all the elements are joined in a way that some brochure writer might call "synergistic." The saddlebags flow brazenly into the side panels and swoop up toward the topbox. The taillight spans the back of the bike in a way that confirms, "These aren't

your father's Krausers." It's definitely a single designer's vision.

Honda's closed the style gap with the 2001 GL, but it still looks slightly frumpier than the Beemer. For those transgressions, the Honda responds with more capacity and superior one-lock, three-latch accessibility to the luggage. BMW makes you lock and unlock each bag separately. With the optional CD changer you can write off a good portion of the LT's right-side saddlebag.

Neither bike wants for amenities, but the approaches taken by BMW

and Honda indicate the opposed corporate cultures. For example, the GL gets a nutty, push-button, electro-hydraulic spring preload adjuster for the shock and an electric headlight-beam adjuster. And a windshield that can be raised or lowered manually only on the side of the road.

BMW makes you raise the seat and twist a knob to change rear preload (neither bike has any more suspension adjustability than that), and reaiming the headlight calls for reaching forward to a mechanical dial. And the windshield magically

raises and lowers (changing its rake as it goes) at the push of a bar-mounted switch. Praise to BMW for giving you a simple means of getting a dirty or wet windshield out of your line of view and thereby providing the most useful application of gadgetry.

Even as the BMW was perspiring to stay astride of the old Gold Wing in acceleration, the story today is just how viciously the new Honda body-slams the K-bike. In power output, the gulf widens to more than 20 horsepower and nearly 40 foot-pounds of torque. At the strip (where few full-dressers hang out, we understand), the BMW gets pegged by more than a second in the quarter-mile, 1.3 seconds to 60 mph, and, most tellingly, by a whopping 3.5 seconds in the 60–80 mph top-gear roll on.

Out on the highway, it's this last statistic you appreciate most. Fully loaded, the throttle-pinned K-LT oozes forward from 60 mph, making it an agonizing trip around that gravel-spewing truck. Don't even consider passing without a down-shift, sometimes two. Tall gearing—comparatively taller even than the low-redlined GL's—hampers roll-on, but helps create a truly serene atmosphere. At 80 mph, the Beemer creates a generous still-air pocket and the laydown-four under all that plastic issues forth but a distant



hum. Not so much as a tingle gets to the bars or pegs.

BMW has worked hard, obviously, to potty-train the formerly raucous K-series engine, and this effort is nowhere more evident than in the fuel-injection calibration. What at first seems only to be very soft "carburetion" turns out to be deliberate mellowing of throttle response. If you feel for it, you can tell the computer's massaging the injection to keep the bike from lurching or surging and the result is a motorcycle that does exactly what you ask of it, no more and no less. Here we'll give higher marks to BMW because the Honda's injection is sharper and

creating an intimidating situation for even average-sized riders. While confidence blooms on the Honda, experienced riders still cast a wary glance at the horizon as the BMW comes to a standstill. Worse, that funky Telelever front end, not exactly full of feedback in other applications, is positively numb in the LT; it's not helped by a steering damper that makes the bike feel like the steering-head bearings are tight (if it had any, that is). While we're praising the Honda, consider that while the BMW's antilock brakes are quite good—although the rear lacks feel—the GL's are *phenomenal*.

On the ergonomics issue we think



Say, anybody seen a three-series BMW with a missing dashboard? K-LT's carlike layout is easy to read and handsome. Useful trip computers rule.

occasionally harder to modulate. What's more, the BMW's clutch take-up is broader and more progressive than the GL's.

If BMW made up ground on engine civility—and let's not take away from the GL's mighty 110 foot-pounds of grunt—then the Honda has countered with a more agile chassis. Ultimately, it comes down to the Honda carrying more weight a lot more effectively; the differential feels like 100 pounds in the Honda's favor, but the BMW is actually 60 pounds lighter.

The Honda's six keeps the mass low, while BMW has piled a lot of stuff atop the panting four-cylinder. As a result, the K-LT feels perilously top-heavy at parking-lot speeds,

BMW has held course and taken the lead. For the new GL, Honda moved the rider forward and not all of us found that position to be an improvement. According to our measurements, the BMW offers two inches more room from the seat to the bar, which has slightly less rise. And although the LT's pegs are slightly farther forward and higher than the GL's, the resulting seating position provides more useful room for the rider, and, coupled with a firmer and plainer saddle, creates a better, more comfortable perch for most riders. That seat, heated no less, can be adjusted to one of two heights in seconds. (We should note in discussing the ergo issue that small riders loathe the BMW.)

Who wins? Tough question to answer, particularly as the bikes have such different personalities and strengths; we're not surprised they're infrequently on the same shopping list. Because we're power junkies, we'll give the nod to the Honda, but confess that an uprated K-LT—just how big can you make that four-hole brick, BMW?—might once again turn the tables. Check back in a year and a half, won't you? —Marc Cook

BMW K1200LT

PRICE

MSRP \$19,200

ENGINE

Type l/c inline-four
Valve arrangement dohc, 16v
Displacement 1171cc
Transmission 5-speed

CHASSIS

Weight 866 lb. (wet)
Fuel capacity 6.2 gal. (23.5L)
Wheelbase 64.3 in. (1633mm)
Seat height 30.3 in. (770mm)



continued from page 37

and traffic shrinks into the rear-view mirrors at a heady clip.

Armed with 85 horsepower at 5000 rpm, the GL1500 had respectable acceleration—for a cruise ship. Respectable enough to cover the quarter-mile in 13.52 seconds at 96.1 mph. Making 104.1 horses at 5500 rpm, the GL1800 is way faster. Jumping from 0–60 in 4.4 seconds, the 1800 knocks back a quarter-mile in 12.78 seconds at 103.3 mph. That's still a half-heartbeat behind the 12.76-second/100.8-mph best of Honda's own Valkyrie Interstate. But how about some truly meaningful perspective? Our 2001 GL is quicker to 60 and through the quarter-mile than a Lamborghini Diablo VT. As that sinks in, please observe a moment of silence to contemplate the emotional aftershocks of having your \$286,000 Italian ego extension slain by a *touring* bike. Sure enough.

Following I-71 through the heart of Cincinnati, the 1800's triple-digit torque becomes quite the practical advantage. Merely opening the throttle at 70 mph dispatches the somnambulistic Camrys, impudent A4 Audis and all manner of mobile interstate chicanes at a rate the GL1500 would need one, maybe two downshifts to match. Against the clock, the GL1800 squirts from 60–80 mph in 5.9 seconds in its overdrive fifth gear, vs. 7.1 seconds for the GL1500. Seconds blur into minutes, then hours. Soon you're nodding off to a regrettable Madonna video in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and awakening to a battalion of Future Farmers of America forming up in the motel parking lot.

DAY TWO is winding down as the Wing rolls into the Shell station in Union City, Tennessee, just east of the Mississippi River and the Missouri state line. With 208.8 miles on the first of its two LCD tripmeters, the 1800 swallows 5.2 gallons of unleaded. Maintain that 40-mpg performance and the low-fuel light wakes up at 228; 36 miles past that and you're a pedestrian. Stiff headwinds and a restless throttle hand dropped our average for the trip to 36 mpg; one mpg better than our last GL1500 test rig, but still a plenty-safe 230 miles between fill-ups.

Cutting west, the little toe of Missouri pointing south into Arkansas is a desolate extremity. Sad little ramshackle houses set in gray fields of shorn cotton. Not even the radio can find anything cheerful. Snapping the throttle open hard to reel in some happier scenery triggers a subtle pinging in the engine room. Despite its two 3-D digital fuel-injection maps and a 3-D digital ignition map, 87-octane unleaded provokes indigestion. Best switch to the midgrade stuff. Chasing a blustery sunset into the Ozarks, the day

**The corner that
was there is here,
and much quicker
than it ever
would have been
on the 1500.**



ends in Hardy, Arkansas, with a carefully chilled liquid refreshment on the banks of the Spring River.

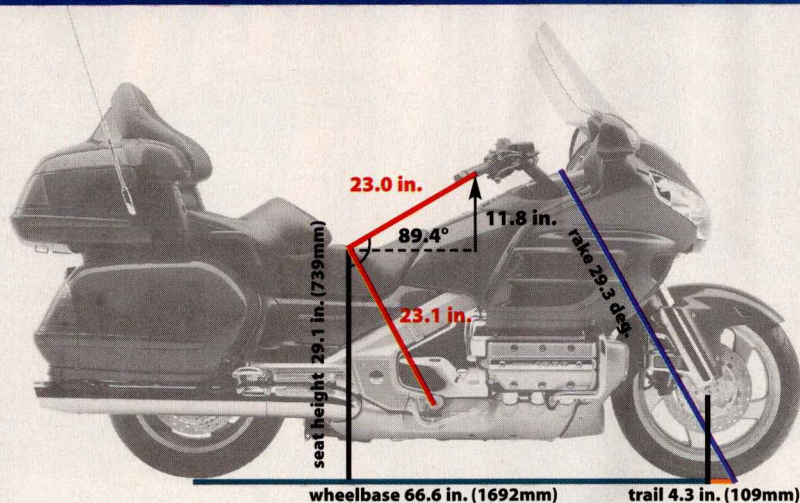
DAY THREE starts early on roads so perfect you don't deserve to know where they are. OK, if you're in the neighborhood, don't miss U.S. Route 62 between Harrison and Yellville. Just behave yourselves or we'll hear about it. Who needs the Alps when you have this? No bumps, no holes, no herds of maladroit soccer moms in lumbering SUVs—just miles of arcing, sweeping, diving pavement. The kind of roads that usually makes us take the Gold Wing name in vain and pine for an F4. Know what? No more. There's no CD changer in an F4.

Turn up the David Lindley and hang on, baby. Acceleration is suitably linear for a motorcycle of this stature, but once the tach needle crosses 4000, things happen fast. The corner that was there is *here*, and much quicker than it ever would have been on the 1500. Thankfully, the new bike's brakes are more equal to the task.

A year ago, this type of corner entrance speed would make one large, GL1500SE-sized hole in a highland forest on the Ozark Plateau. Now? Working with the antitive system, Honda's new syncopated braking arrangement slows the half-ton-plus bike/rider combination strongly and predictably. No drama. No excess chassis pitch. No worries. Should you be unlucky enough to cross something slick on the brakes, the ABS simply takes care of it. Why only 20 percent of 2001 Gold Wing production will be ABS-equipped is beyond us. We wouldn't own one without it.

Now, where were we? Oh yeah—turn! Push on the bar to initiate the new trajectory and your orders are executed—immediately. There's a direct line of communication between pullback bars and contact patches. With shock preload bumped to 20, the bike develops a mild allergy to square-edged pavement scars. Beyond that, the fork and shock manage the Wing's ample mass beautifully at a sporty clip. The new aluminum skeleton and single-sided swingarm suffer none of the midcorner monkey motion that

Honda Gold Wing



MSRP \$17,499
 \$18,499 (w/ABS)
 Warranty 36 months,
 unlimited miles
 Colors black, blue, red, yellow

ENGINE

Type liquid-cooled opposed-six
 Valve arrangement... sohc, 12v
 Bore x stroke 74.0 x 71.0mm
 Displacement 1832cc

details, details...

- Key-fob luggage latch release a real treat
- Big, wide-set mirrors let you check your six
- Huge taillights make sure you're seen
- You'll peel paint with those high beams
- CD player's location will collect dirt and moisture; gotta unpack, too
- How about adjustable ergos, Honda?

Compression ratio... 9.8:1
 Carburetion fuel injection
 Transmission 5-speed (plus reverse)
 Final drive shaft

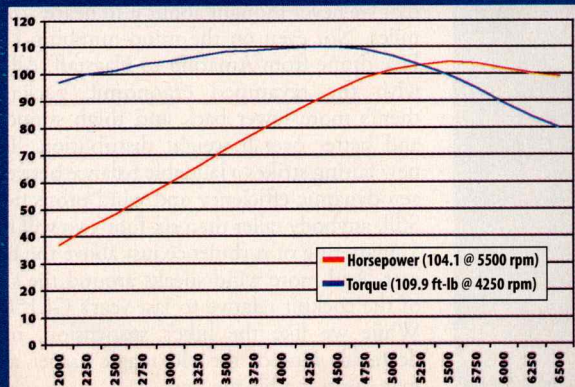
CHASSIS

Frame twin-spar aluminum alloy
 Weight 898 lb. (wet)
 858 lb. (fuel tank empty)
 Fuel capacity 6.6 gal. (25L)
 Suspension, front... 45mm fork
 Suspension, rear... single shock adjustable
 for spring preload
 Brake, front dual three-piston caliper,
 296mm disc
 Brake, rear three-piston caliper,
 316mm disc
 Tire, front 130/70R18
 Bridgestone G707
 Tire, rear 180/60R16
 Bridgestone G704

PERFORMANCE

Corrected 1/4-mile* 12.78 sec. @ 103.3 mph
 0-60 mph 4.44 sec.
 0-100 mph 13.27 sec.
 Top-gear roll-on, 60-80 mph 5.90 sec.

Power to weight ratio** 10.25 lb/hp
 Fuel mileage (low/high/average) 30/40/36
 Cruising range (exc. reserve) 205 miles
 CD changer capacity 6 discs



test notes

- Speedo error:
60 mph, actual 57
- The GL's flat six starts the dyno trace at just less than 100 foot-pounds and only dips below on the far side of 5500 rpm. More than 82 percent of the GL's peak torque is available from 2000 to 6000 rpm.

*Performance with test-session weather conditions corrected to sea-level standard conditions (59 degrees F, 29.92 in. of mercury)

**Wet weight plus 170 lb. rider divided by measured horsepower

Cheers & Jeers

HONDA GOLD WING

Engine	10	Massive torque, smooth delivery
Drivetrain	8	Slightly sharp clutch takeup, all else OK
Handling	9	Most sporting dresser ever
Braking	10	Phenomenal power, feedback; ABS, too!
Ride	8	Not cush but totally in (new) character
Ergonomics	7	Tight for tall ones; fine for everyone else
Features	10	What doesn't it have besides a roof?
Refinement	8	Ride and fuel-injection could be improved
Value	8	Pay a lot, get a lot, but it'll last forever
Fun Factor	8	Higher than you'd think by lookin' at it

verdict: Honda successfully balances the contradictory needs of long-haul touring and big-bike sportiness in a package that resets the standards in the luxu-touring category.



In addition to yellow, blue and black, the new Wing is available in what Honda calls "Illusion Red" (bottom) for an extra \$500. Light-interference pigments in the pricier paint appear to change color depending on the angle from which the bike is viewed.

plagued the old bike's steel bones. It just carves dutifully around the corner until the pegs drag, carves deeper until those big crash bars drag. Carve deeper than that and you'll find out why they're called crash bars.



Relatively squatty Bridgestone radials (130/70R18 front, 180/60R16 rear) help tighten up the new GL's handling equation also. Presumably to preserve some of that trademark plushness, our carefully prepped test bike (and at least one other we checked) was delivered with 32 psi up front and 36 psi in the rear instead of the 36/41 combination prescribed by the label inside the trunk lid. However, since the lower pressures did more to improve straight-line plushness than twisty-road behavior or tire life, we pumped 'em up and had no rubber-related complaints on wet pavement or dry.

So maybe you go to the Ozarks. And maybe you wonder why it's so green. Because it rains!—in this case, from clouds the color of perfect coals in some great celestial barbecue. Set to the lowest of its four click-stopped positions, the new windscreen is just low enough for a six-foot-three inch to peer over, which helps immeasurably in the wet. A little rain sneaks around the sides of the fairing; otherwise, weather protection is first-rate.

The 1800's Starship Enterprise headlight array throws a perfect swath of light from shoulder to shoulder of this meandering two-lane. Cornering lights do a miraculous job of illuminating bits of wet, curvy roadside you won't see on other bikes. A handy dial in the cockpit controls a motorized aiming system that lets you raise or lower the beam to match any situation. No motorcycle on the planet lights up the pavement after dark like this new GL.

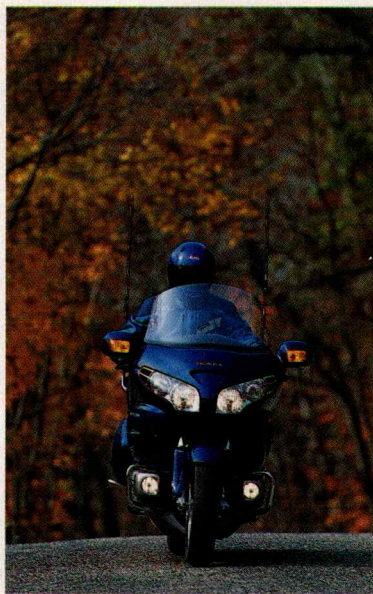
Fayetteville, Arkansas, arrives just in time to avoid a thorough drenching. Which is more than we can say for the surly little waiter with our *tacos al carbon y un cerveza por favor*. Touring is a beautiful thing, but it enforces certain compromises. Say, for instance, you

burn an entire day milling down footpegs against the tastiest roads in the Ozarks, take a long lunch and cover maybe 232 miles. That would leave you roughly 1568 miles and four states from home. Time to face the music and the I-40. That's when you thank God and Masa Aoki for traditional Gold Wing virtues.

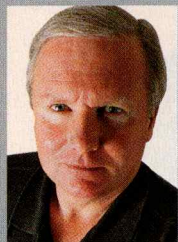
It's **DAY FOUR** and Oklahoma is for cruise control. Touring often inspires such profundity, which in turn inspires Oklahomans to write nasty letters. Still, somewhere between Hydro and Elk City, it's nice to let that little silicon chip lock the speedo needle on 80 mph and listen to the weatherband's virtual Stephen Hawking foretell atmospheric unpleasanties yet to come. Thankfully the Wing offers other electronic diversions to the transcontinental tourist. Punch up the ambient air temperature, then have the radio hunt up the dozen strongest AM and FM stations. Fine-tune the bass, treble and ambient functions to match the new U2 CD; discuss foreign policy with fascist truckers on the CB—it's all good.

The best compliment we can pay the seat is that we never thought about it in nearly 2800 miles. Not even on the mind-numbing Day Five drone from Amarillo to Flagstaff. Allied with the revamped ergonomic package, there's more lower back and thigh support, and better overall weight distribution. The new fairing strikes a laudable balance between aerodynamic efficiency and wind protection. Still, anybody taller than six-foot-two will feel a smattering of turbulence just above the helmet. And more wind sneaks around the side of the cockpit relative to last year's GL1500. While we like the bike's suspension, irredeemable fans of the old magic carpet ride may deem it a bit too taut.

In a perfect world, the new Wing would do



Off the Record



friedman

Age: 52
Height: 5 ft. 10 in.
Weight: 210 lb.
Inseam: 32 in.
Someone took your GL and you need to ride 400 miles tonight. What to do?
Take the Cessna Centurion.

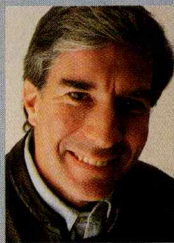
Since the GL1100s, the Gold Wings have been one of motorcycling's marvels. Honda has consistently managed to make them behave like much more compact machines, and the new Wing Lite stretches the envelope even further. Now you get all the gadgetry and conveniences with even less compromise in handling and manageability. And then there is that added power. This is actually the class where strong power makes the most sense, because tourers are the ones most likely to need to launch past a line of trucks crawling up a hill.

My major complaint is that the seat and handlebar are too close together. I really wanted to slide back a couple of inches, especially when the long tillerlike bars were turned to full lock—putting my hand in my ribs. I hope that someone makes shorter handlebars.

I have some minor gripes, like more buffeting with the windshield lowered and not quite as excellent sound quality, but most of the details turn out to be useful.

I'd want ABS with such strong linked brakes, which make it hard for me to get the precise braking I want at each wheel during hard stops on dicey surfaces. That is the only area where BMW's 1200 surpasses this bike, in my opinion. But then I liked the GL1500 better than the Beemer too. Now there is no contest. No recount needed here. The GL1800 is the undisputed King Tourer.

—Art Friedman



smith

Age: 48
Height: 5 ft. 10 in.
Weight: 185 lb.
Inseam: 31 in.
Someone took your GL and you need to ride 400 miles tonight. What to do?
Hop on the ST1100.

How to tell if you're driving a car: If your backside is nestled in a formed bucket seat that promises hours of comfortable support, you could be driving a car. If your instrument array includes an LCD that informs you of everything from radio tuning to whether a trunk lid is unlatched, you could be driving a car. If you have individually adjustable vent outlets to control temperature around your legs and upper body, you could be driving a car. If opening the throttle calls up impressive thrust all across the rev range, you could be driving a car. If wind roar barely increases as the speedometer needle sweeps into triple digits, you could be driving a car.

But, if you lean the right way in turns, into them, graceful as an airplane, instead of out of them, in the crude manner of four-wheelers, then you're definitely riding the Wing.

—Kevin Smith



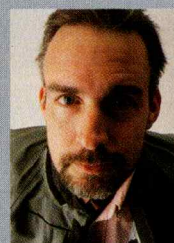
kai

Age: 30
Height: 5 ft. 4 in.
Weight: 145 lb.
Inseam: 28 in.
Someone took your GL and you need to ride 400 miles tonight. What to do?
Can we have a virtual meeting?

Being vertically challenged, I've always been a bit intimidated while riding large, luxury-touring rigs like the Gold Wing. Imagine my sur-

prise, then, when I found myself able to touch the ground with both feet when aboard the GL. Combined with the bike's narrow saddle (the front part, anyway) and lowish seat height, this meant I was able to ride the Wing with confidence. Out on the road the Wing was impressive, with great handling (for a 898-pound motor cycle), smooth power delivery, greenhouse-like wind and weather protection, and had a better sound system than my car. Now if I could only learn to split lanes on the thing!

—Garrett Kai



cook

Age: 37
Height: 5 ft. 10 in.
Weight: 200 lb.
Inseam: 32 in.
Someone took your GL and you need to ride 400 miles tonight. What to do?
Top off the R/GS and I'm gone.

Amid the preintroduction hype was floated this hot-air balloon: The new Gold Wing is so good, so sporty, that Honda may as well kill the ST1100 now and get it over with. Yeah, right. I'll admit that the GL1800 impresses with its grace under way and irresistible torque, and that it's vastly more tolerant of aggressive riding than the previous six-banger Wing, but it's still very much a Gold Wing. That means stuff, lots of stuff.

Most of it works: big, legible instruments and a surprisingly good still-air pocket (particularly in light of the smaller fairing), and an engine that harbors just a bit of rowdiness. Some of it doesn't: the nagging warning system that insists a saddlebag lid is open when it's not (once you've slammed it good and hard a couple of times to actually get it closed) and a riding position that literally pains me. Maybe that's how I know I'm not ready to get off of sport-tourers just yet.

—Marc Cook

350 miles on a tank of gas. Its saddlebags would always latch the first time instead of requiring a determined *thwack* to stop the insistent blinking of the cockpit display from mocking your incompetence. The cruise control would grab the requisite speed on uphill and downhill more quickly. Maybe the dash display should include a GPS readout. And the cockpit could be roomier for larger folks. But for that stuff we can wait for 2002. Maybe.

Just as the first 1500/6 was in 1988, the new 1800 is just far enough ahead of its time to bother certain less-progressive segments of motorcycling society. Sporting traditionalists will recoil at a Honda motorcycle with almost as many part numbers as a Honda Civic, and deem it the harbinger of a mini-van apocalypse. Good Sam tourists in sack cloth and ashes will whimper on about Honda abandoning the multitudes in pin-encrusted vests and "Hi, My Name Is" badges who made the Gold Wing what it is in order to court the performance-addled Lexus set.

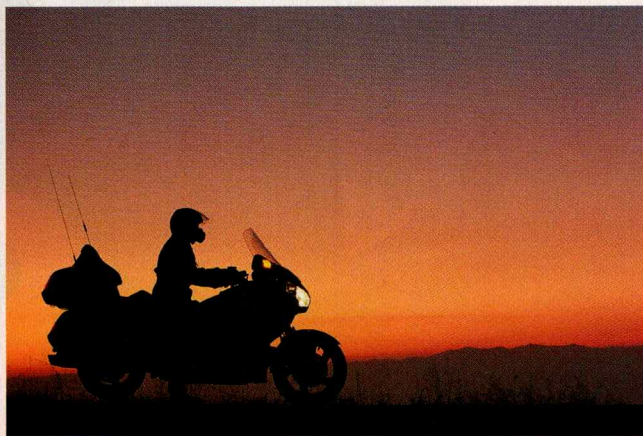
We say that kind of talk encourages random drug testing.

We also say the 2001 Gold Wing does just what its ancestors have done for 25 years, and better than anything else: define and redefine the art of luxury motorcycle travel. Before the GL1800, sporting performance enforced an uncomfortable minimalism on the motorcycle traveler, while luxury motorcycles displayed a dis-

trepping resemblance to Mom's '70 Chrysler New Yorker.

Honda has changed all that. The fact that it has done it for a base price of \$17,499—\$100 less than a 2000 GL1500 SE—leaves us with only one bit of bad. If you're not already in line to put a 2001 Gold Wing in your garage, it may already be too late.

MC





Suzuki

ROAD TEST



LOOKING AT THIS NEW GSX-R600 NEXT TO THE OLD one provides more insight than several marriage-counseling sessions. If you think, for example (and I *don't*), that your wife's tailsection has grown larger over the years as her disposition has grown surlier, you're mistaken. The old GSX-R600's always been that bulbous and cruel, it just never looked that way until the new bike appeared next to it. The old bike is as it was when freshly minted in 1997, when it was hot-hot-hot. Now it looks a little matronly. It's let itself go....

Wrong!—and slap yourself! All that's changed is your perception.

Finally, real competition for Yamaha's YZF-R6

By John Burns

GSX-R600

Suzuki was stretching the truth only slightly when it reported the new bike was 24 pounds lighter; our scales have it 17 pounds lighter than before, but it feels like more. At 423 pounds gassed up and ready to roll, it's right there in Yamaha YZF-R6 territory (the R6 weighs just two pounds more); target locked.

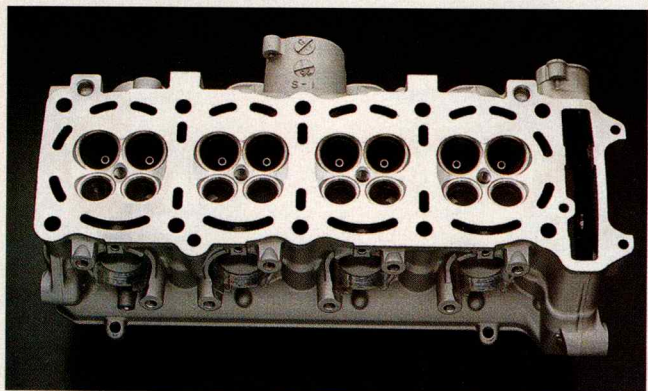
Must have hollow, bird-type bones, then, because the GSX-R600 doesn't feel much smaller than its 750 brother, and we're able to convince ourselves that's not a bad thing in a streetbike. Yes, it's racey as hell, but at the same time there's enough room for a large human to fold himself comfortably atop the bike's thick, comfy seat. Although Suzuki says the fairing's narrower and the wind-shield's a whole inch lower than before, the bike still provides a decent cockpit to tuck into when the elements require it, with nearly an inch more legroom, and there's enough room for several cheese sandwiches beneath the sleek new caboose. All that's left to complain about is that the mirrors are too narrow for you broad-shouldered types. The clip-on bars are still way low, but they are



A new, longer swingarm carries a lighter 5.5-inch wheel, which contains a 2.2-pound-lighter cush drive. New caliper pistons are made of aluminum and—that's right—lighter.

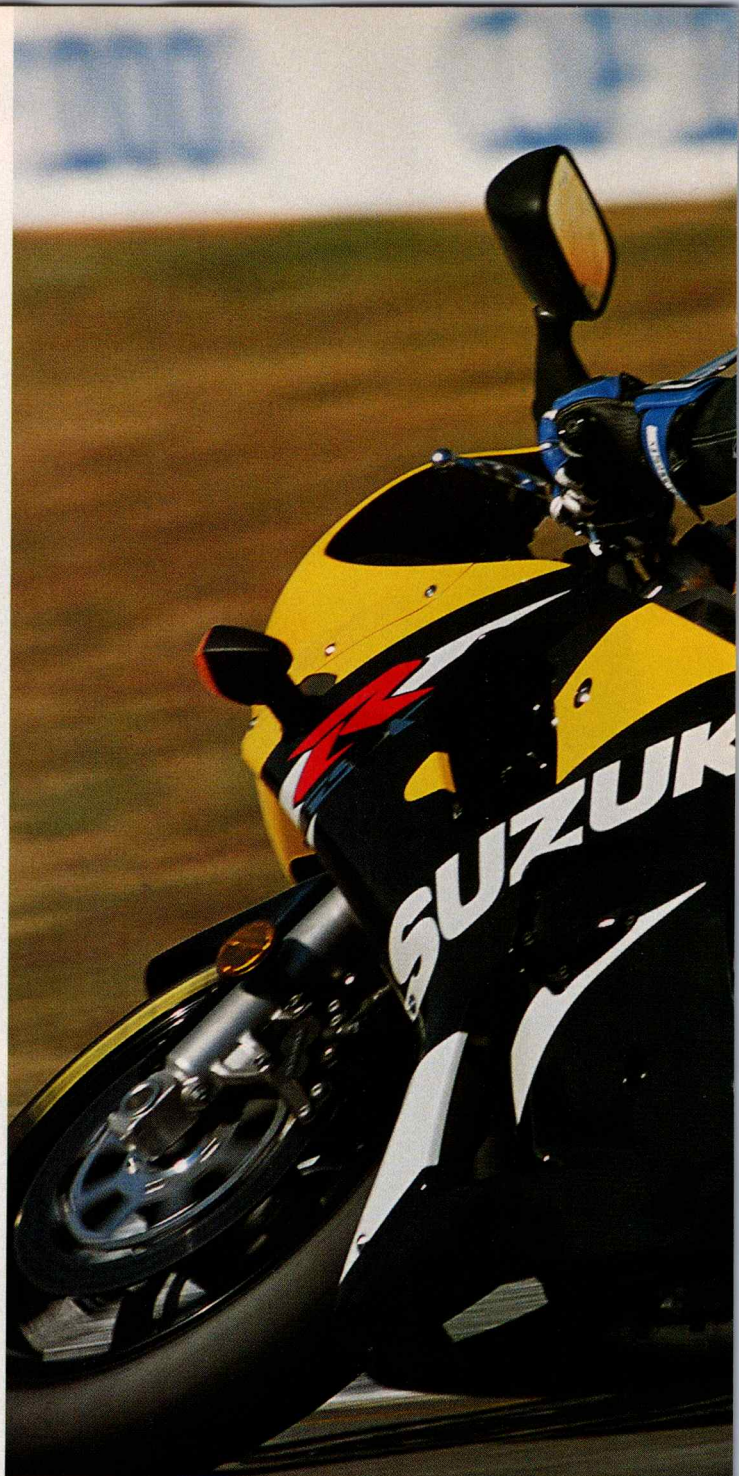


Forged aluminum pistons are a scant two grams lighter than the wheezy old cast ones. In the end, Suzuki took 10 percent off the bike's reciprocating bits—nearly half a pound.



Moving the cams closer together resulted in flatter combustion chambers, higher compression and straighter intake ports, while the head itself grew smaller and two pounds lighter. Intake valves are 27.2mm; exhausts are 22.0—both with thinner stems. Everything in the valve train lost weight, too.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN J. NELSON AND TOM RILES



A combination of improvements makes the previous generation GSX-R feel terminally couchbound. It's amazing what a nip and tuck of 10mm here and there makes.

about half-an-inch closer to the seat now, and that greatly aids comfort. Compared with the Yamaha YZF-R6, the bars are still a bit of a stretch, and the GSX-R feels a little bigger and wider in general.

If you think the old bike looks a bit frumpy, then you don't want to ride this new one unless you're prepared to file papers immediately. A combination of improvements makes the previous generation GSX-R feel terminally couchbound. It's amazing what a nip and tuck of 10mm here and there makes.

First, you shrink the engine. The new powerplant is 21mm

shorter, front to rear, 8mm narrower, 20mm shorter and almost nine pounds lighter than before. Normally, moving the cams closer together in a DOHC head makes the head taller, but the GSX-R's head is 6mm shorter and 9.5mm narrower, front to rear. Combustion chamber volume is down to a scant 13.4cc each, compression is up to 12.2:1 per (lighter) forged piston, and smaller (shot-peened) rods and tapered piston pins aid in removing nearly a half-pound of reciprocating weight compared with the old engine. Naturally, valve buckets and stems are smaller and



lighter than before, with lighter single-valve springs made from a new alloy—the better to follow the bigger bumps of the new, seven-ounce lighter camshafts.

Downsizing the engine allowed Suzuki to shorten the bike's frame—from steering stem to swingarm pivot—by 10mm, and to shorten it 13mm in the vertical plane. Those things, along with grafting on a 20mm-longer swingarm (more like 25mm according to our tape measure), mean the new bike carries more weight on its front wheel: 51.4 percent now, Suzuki says, instead of an even 50 percent before. And with the now further-forward rider in place, even more than that.

We know that's a good thing for lapping the racetrack, but the amazing thing is how much difference it makes in everyday street riding. Not that anybody ever complained about the old bike, but the new one's tires are much more communicative all the time. Although it shares identical rake and trail numbers with the old

600 and is in fact 15mm *longer* of wheelbase, it swaps directions much more easily and precisely, even if all you're doing is going 'round the outside of a bus.

Of course, an infusion of motive power does nothing to quell the little bike's newfound sprightliness. You expected bigger bores, bigger intake valves, etc., to make more peak horsepower up there where the tach needle seldom penetrates during normal street use. But the beauty here is that the new fuel-injection system also gives this baby GSX-R a serious dose of machismo where it matters more on the street. As moss accumulated around the old bike's aged trunk, its lack of midrange power stood out that much more amongst R6s and ZX-6R Kawasakis. Seems the tables have turned.

Suzuki did all the right things with the fuel injection in this one. Where four 36mm Mikuni carburetors fed the previous engine, the 2001 bike uses 38mm throttle bodies controlled by a 16-bit computer with 96 kilobytes of ROM, packing eight injection



Now That's Progress

How much faster is it then? Speed is in the wrist of the beholder

AFTER YOU'VE RINSED OFF THE hyperbole, how much faster around our favorite racetrack is the new GSX-R600? It just so happened we had a 2000-spec GSX-R lying around, two pairs of Avon's new Azaro Supersport II's (complete with their new "tape-wound" VBD construction), and a pair of riders who get paid for thinking up just such excuses to go for a nice, low-pressure roost 'round the Streets of Willow circuit.

Maximum Leader Boehm, after several tire-scrub laps, proceeded to turn a best time on the old bike of 1:17.06. Downing a large slice of pizza (*Hey, it was lunchtime!—Ed.*) and hopping thence onto the 2001 model, MJB got down to 1:15.26—1.8 seconds faster—within five or six laps.

The Boehmster is not a small guy, and we were all set to turn a

bunch more preload into the new bike's rear shock to compensate for his 225 pounds. In fact, a mere half-turn more preload had him just about in the desired 30mm-sag happy zone. Fork springs are a tad softer; even preloaded in to two lines showing (from four), Boehm's heft compressed the front nearly 45mm—more than he would've liked.

MJB came back singing the praises of the new bike: much easier and quicker to turn and transition from side to side; tons more feedback; approximately a moonshot more precise; way stable; much revvier; fantastic, feely brakes.

I had already ridden both, and fell immediately and familiarly into Yes-man mode. You right, MJB. Mmmmm-hmmm. Yep. Uh-huh. I couldn't agree more. And this

time I meant it.

Turning the clock upon myself revealed a scintillatingly almost-mediocre 1:18.87 lap aboard the old GSX-R. Hoo. I should get easily into 1:16s on the new one, then—which would be a new personal best. Someone alert the wire services.

Didn't happen. My best time on the new bike was an imperceptible 0.3 second faster. What happened? Here's my carefully constructed excuse: That rear Azaro is a "more durable" compound than before, and I never got the thing hot enough to stick really well. On corner exits where I felt safe yanking the old bike's throttle open, the new bike—with its extra power—would begin to spin the rear tire, whereupon I would cease and desist opening the throttle. Otherwise, I'd have sworn I was going easily two seconds quicker

on the new bike.

No arguments with that new engine, at least. Our radar gun showed Boehm at the end of the front straight moving, on average, 98 mph on the old GSX-R, where the new bike was pulling itself up to 104 or 105. That's a big difference—more than what's visible on the dyno chart.

The question on everyone's mind then, is: Will it spank Yamaha's R6? Hard to say, since the R6 will have undergone a rash of improvements by the time we get our 2001 test bike. Timed laps with our little friend Kent Kunitsugu of *Sport Rider* at the helm, though, turned up nearly identical lap times for the new GSX-R and the 2000 R6. The Yamaha, Kent says, feels a bit nimbler in the slow stuff, the Suzuki more stable in the fast bits. We shall see. —J.B.

DEAN GROOVER

...the new GSX-R feels like a 750 in the midrange, and produces that power smooooothly—even when stone cold.

maps. Together with the new bike's Suzuki Dual Throttle Valve (which you *must* already be familiar with since we've nattered on about it for the last two months), the new GSX-R feels like a 750 in the midrange, and produces that power smooooothly—even when stone cold. Throttle response is crisp but never jerky, and the whole drivetrain is commendably tight and lashfree, if a bit buzzy at certain cruising rpm.

In short, the thing feels less "peaky" than the other 600s (which are all much less peaky than five years ago), and so you could drive around all day without realizing what a ripping little powerplant this one is when the tach needle makes its way past 8000 or so. The 2mm-shorter stroke and reduced internal engine friction make the motor highly revvy, and has it producing 100.5 horses

at 13,000 rpm on our stationary Dynojet dyno (vs. 96.4 at 12,500 for our last R6). Bear in mind Suzuki claims that the new, improved SRAD ram-air system pressurizes the bigger airbox considerably more than before, once rolling, and the pressure sensor located at the rear of the airbox fattens up the mixture and conspires with ignition timing.

Nobody ever complained about the previous bike's suspension, but at the risk of sounding like a paid advertising insert, we have to admit the new Showa equipment goes it one or two better. While firm enough to support heavy riders at our local closed circuit, both ends serve up a perfectly supple ride over all sorts of urban nasties—the same sort of seemingly impossible dichotomy pulled off by brother GSX-R750 last year.

Make no mistake. It's the toughest test of endurance motorsports has to offer. Mile after mile of absolutely the worst elements the Mexican desert can possibly dish out.

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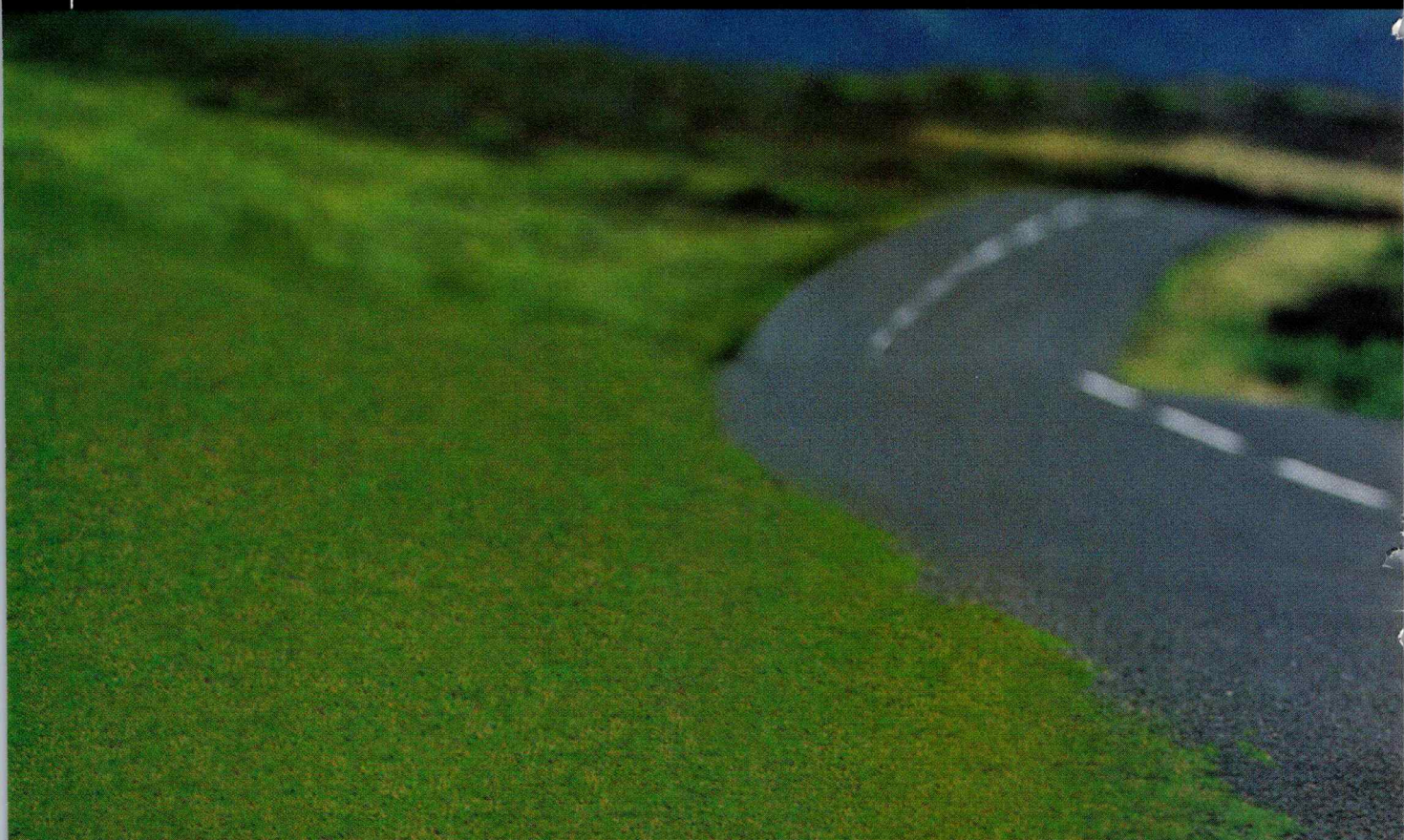


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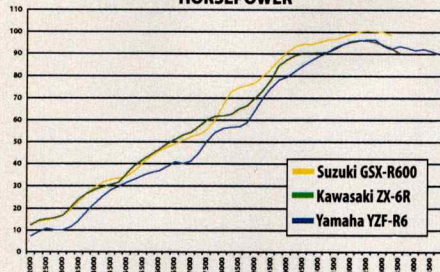
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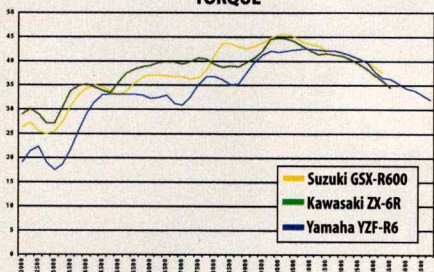
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HORSEPOWER



The GSX-R sacrifices little to achieve a class-leading peak. Next to the 2000-spec YZF-R6, the Suzuki dominates the horsepower curve from top to bottom, ending in a peak of 100.5 hp, 4.1 up on the R6. The Yamaha maintains a 1000-rpm over-rev on the Suzuki but pays the price elsewhere. The ZX-6R outmuscles the Suzuki for a bit in the middle.

TORQUE



Save for a dip at 4750 rpm, the ZX-6R's torque output whips the GSX-R until 8000 rpm, when the Suzuki jumps ahead—just look at that surge from 8000 to 8500 rpm. From the saddle, the Suzuki's torque curve feels flatter and more regular than it looks on the chart. Amazing stuff.

Cheers & Jeers

SUZUKI GSX-R600

Engine	9	Good low-end, great top-end
Drivetrain	9	Tight; seamless injection
Handling	9	Laser-beamish
Braking	10	Retina-stretching
Ride	9	Amazingly painfree yet stern
Ergonomics	7	Better than before, still "committed"
Features	7	Features few extraneous features
Refinement	9	New GSX-R's a step forward for Suzuki
Value	9	Awesomely competent for \$8000
Fun Factor	10	If you're lapping up your favorite track

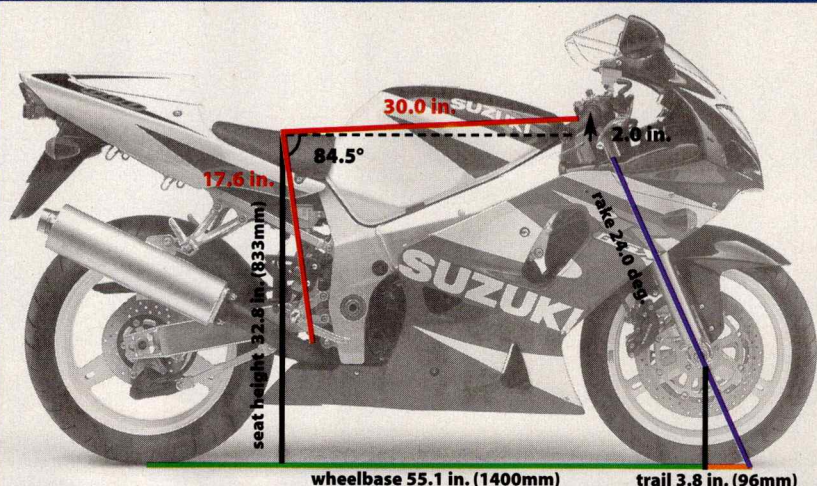
verdict: Bigger than the reigning 600, but no heavier—how'd they do that? On the track, we'll have to wait and see, but on the street the Suzuki may be the new queen of lean.

Like before, the bike gets a 45mm cartridge fork, but the new one is 18 ounces lighter, gives 5mm more stroke (125mm), and has revised springs and damping to deal with the more-forward weight distribution. The rear shock is also about a pound lighter, now that it's carved from aluminum instead of steel, and is a full inch shorter eye-to-eye. It's fatter, though; the piston's up from 40mm to 46mm in diameter. The longer swingarm works it through a revised linkage, with less rising-rate action than before.

Speaking of lighter, the wheels are new also. The front is 12.5 ounces lighter, the

continued on page 85

Suzuki GSX-R600



MSRP \$7999
 Warranty 12 months, unlimited miles
 Colors blue/white, black/yellow

ENGINE

Type liquid-cooled inline-four
 Valve arrangement dohc, 16v
 Bore x stroke 67.0 x 42.5mm
 Displacement 599cc
 Compression ratio 12.2:1
 Carburetion fuel injection, 38mm throttle bodies
 Transmission 6-speed

details, details...

- No more jets and things to fuel with
- Excellent bungee attachment rail
- Stow things under the hump
- Steering damper much better than a stick in eye
- Suzuki contingency program means you'll make money on the deal

Final drive #525 sealed chain

CHASSIS

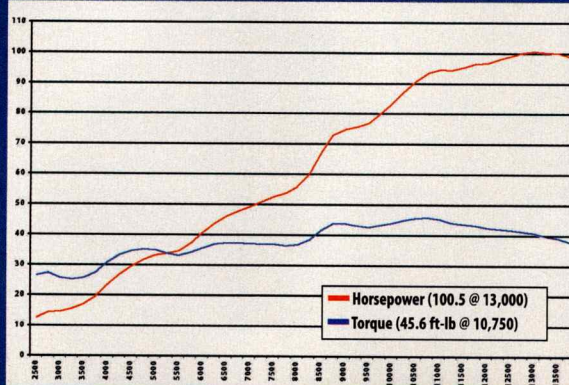
Frame twin-spar aluminum alloy
 Weight 423 lb. (wet)
 394 lb. (fuel tank empty)
 Fuel capacity 4.8 gal. (18L)

Suspension, front 45mm cartridge fork adjustable for spring preload, compression and rebound damping
 Suspension, rear single shock adjustable for spring preload, compression and rebound damping
 Brake, front dual four-piston calipers, 320mm discs
 Brake, rear two-piston caliper, 220mm disc
 Tire, front 120/70ZR17 Dunlop D207
 Tire, rear 180/55ZR17 Dunlop D207

PERFORMANCE

Corrected 1/4-mile* 10.8 sec. @ 125.4 mph
 0-60 mph 2.93 sec.
 0-100 mph 6.96 sec.
 Top-gear roll-on, 60-80 mph 5.33 sec.

Power to weight ratio** 5.9 lb/hp
 Fuel mileage (low/high/average) 36/42/39
 Cruising range (exc. reserve) 148 miles



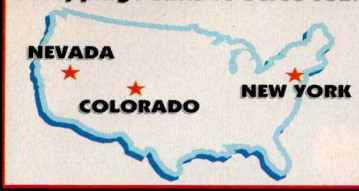
test notes

- 10.80 seconds at 125 mph makes the GSX-R the new 600 quarter-mile champ
- It's also the first 600 to push the Dynojet line above 100

*Performance with test-session weather conditions corrected to sea-level standard conditions (59 degrees F, 29.92 in. of mercury)

**Wet weight plus 170 lb. rider divided by measured horsepower

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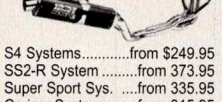
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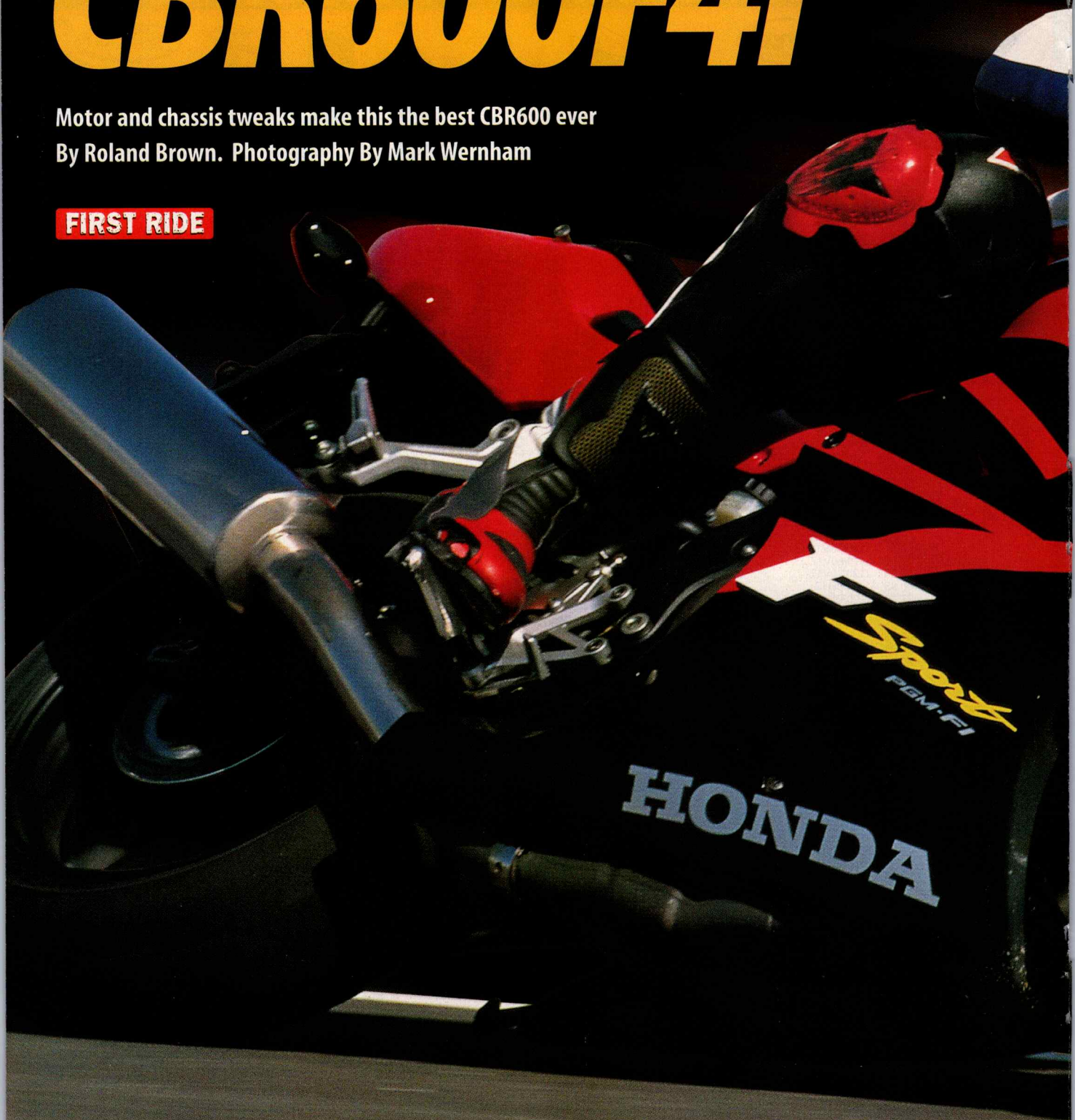
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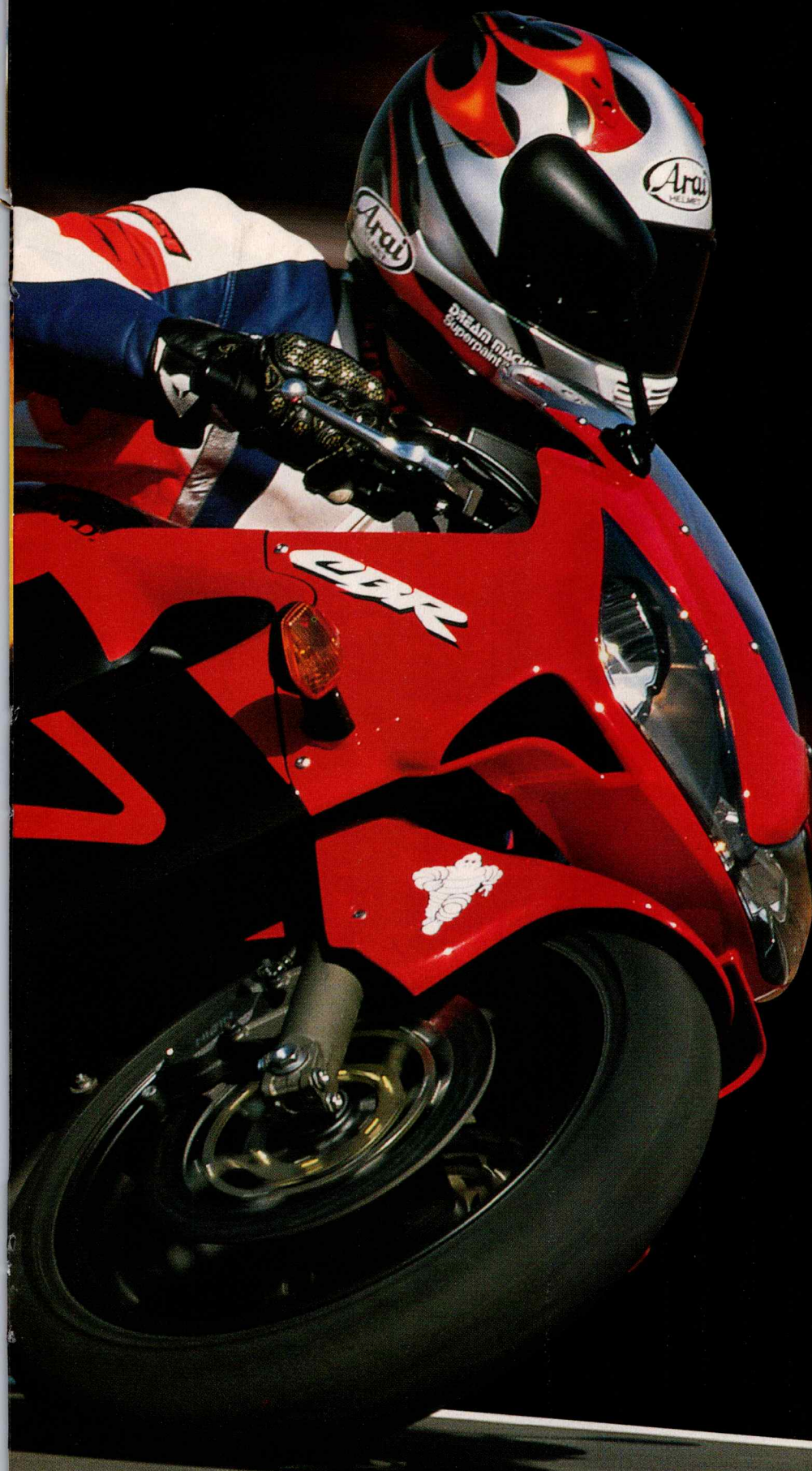
Honda CBR600F4i

Motor and chassis tweaks make this the best CBR600 ever

By Roland Brown. Photography By Mark Wernham

FIRST RIDE





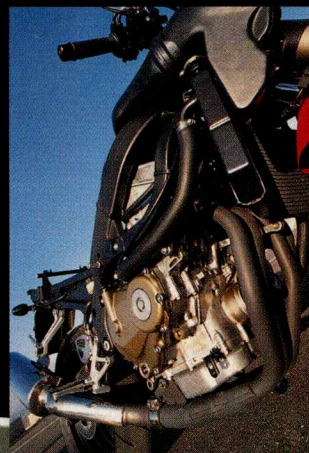
Editors Note: With the U.S. introduction of Honda's new CBR600F4i still weeks away, we thought a report from the bike's European launch would help get you up to speed on this year's 600cc Supersport crop.

THE NEW STYLING SHOULD HAVE given me a clue, but the sound remained a surprise. Winding open the throttle at 7000 rpm in third gear as I pulled away on Honda's latest 600-classer for the very first time, I was rewarded with a distinct snarl from the induction system as the newly fuel-injected motor cleared its throat and got to work.

Wait—a snarl from a CBR600? Blatant, unsuppressed aggression from Mr. Inoffensive? It's true. The new CBR600F4i (or CBR600F Sport as it's known in Europe, and as shown here) not only has a sharper, re-worked plastic body, but also is a much meaner machine when you tweak the throttle. In fact, with its many changes, this is easily the raciest and most exciting CBR600 ever.

The major news in the engine department is the adoption of fuel injection similar to that of the CBR929RR. The intake changes also involved enlarging the airbox from 6.6 to 8.1 liters, and feeding it via larger—and distinctly greedier-looking—ducts that curve down on either side of the fairing's remodeled nose.

Honda also made changes to the valvetrain to help make the CBR more competitive in European





Supersport racing, where it has been struggling in recent seasons. Those changes include the use of dual concentric valve springs and reworked valve seats. There's also a new eight-plate clutch, shorter fifth- and sixth-gear ratios, and a slightly lighter flywheel for improved throttle response. Still, most of the 599cc 16-valve engine's internals are carried over from before. Claimed peak output remains 108 hp at 12,500 rpm, identical to last year's bike (torque is fractionally down), but you can bet the changes will allow the new bike to respond better to race tuning.

Chassis changes start with a black-finished frame that retains the old geometry but is strengthened in the steering head and swingarm pivot areas. Other changes include aluminum instead of steel damper tubes inside the 43mm fork, and tweaked suspension settings at both ends. CBR929RR-spec wheels save a few ounces, while revised front brakes with lightened disc inners and aluminum instead of steel caliper pistons shave a little more weight.

Honda chose Spain's Almeria circuit for the launch. The track is a snaking ribbon that packs more than a dozen tight turns into just more than a couple of miles. And to make things trickier, the track had a light coating of dust and sand off the racing line. But if ever there was a well-behaved yet still startlingly fast sportbike on which to get up to

speed, the new CBR was it.

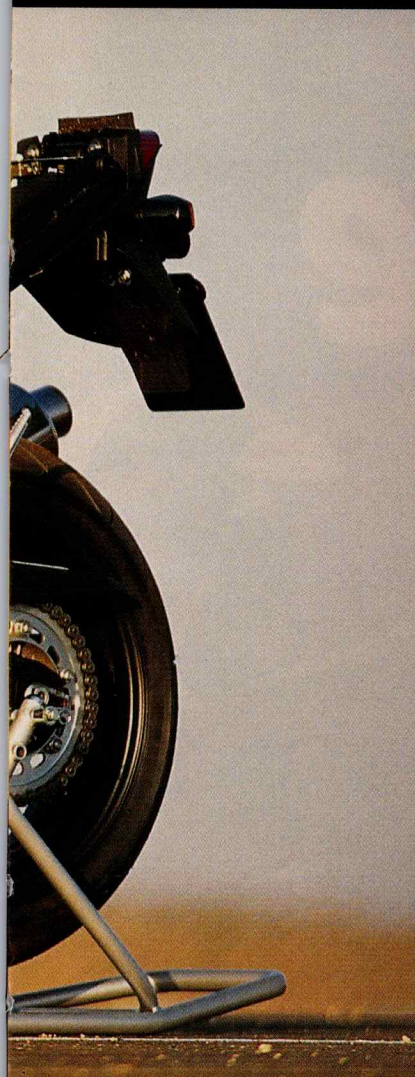
Much of the bike's feel is familiar to anyone who's ridden a current F4. Last year's bike had a near-perfect riding position, a slim fuel tank and a reasonably efficient screen. Honda clearly took a "why mess with success" attitude here. The view from the F4i's single seat is much like that of the 929RR, with a large digital speedometer (which incorporates a clock for the first time) and digital fuel gauge.

Out on the track, heading down the long back straight with my head behind the CBR's decently sized screen, I found the speedo obscured slightly by the clutch cable. At the time I was more concerned with looking out for the gear-change light that comes on at the engine's 14,200-rpm redline,

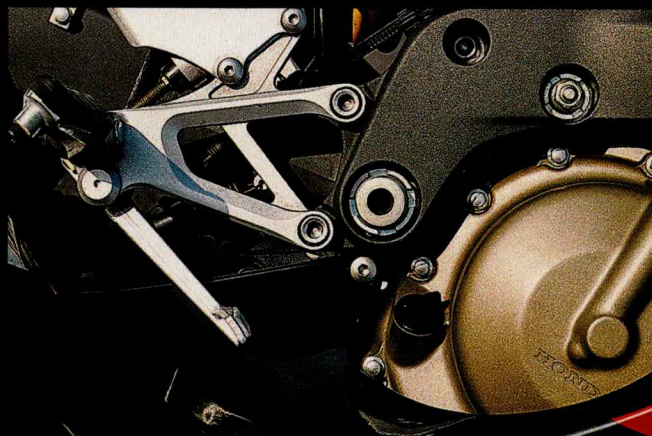
though I soon discovered it to be too dim to be of much use. (The U.S.-spec bike will probably get the shift light.) Other riders reported seeing more than 160 mph on a long straight during the street portion of the test, but there was no time to reach that speed before sitting up and hauling on the brakes for the next right-hander. Still, the bike was stable whenever higher speeds were explored.

The Honda certainly accelerated hard, especially when the tach needle was kept over 9000 rpm. Between 11,000 rpm and redline, the bike positively roared ahead.





Honda's 600cc CBR swaggers into its third year of production sporting fuel injection and a host of detail improvements. Throttle response is superb, while top-end changes and a lightened crank result in greater high-rev thrust. The frame's black now, and strengthened around the steering head and swingarm pivot. Suspension's revised at both ends, with ounces and grams pared here and there in the running gear. Although meaner, it retains its great-streetbike status.



More impressive than the CBR's high-rev performance, though, was the fuel-injected motor's impeccably crisp-yet-smooth response when the throttle was wound open. Perhaps the highest compliment I can pay is to say that while on the bike I was never once aware that it was injected. (Except, that is, when starting the engine from cold. There's no choke or fast-idle lever to worry about, and the thing starts and idles perfectly right off the bat.)

The bike's rider-friendly throttle response was much appreciated given the flowing nature of a track that snaked through the Spanish scrubland like a miniature Mississippi. One seven-bend sequence required just a downshift and two brief dabs of front brake—but plenty of directional changes. The F4i's light steering, neutral cornering feel and excellent suspension control all added to the bike's speed and stability.

On its standard suspension settings the CBR was a bit too soft for my near-200-pound weight. Even firmed up a bit I found the fork bottoming when the impressively fierce front brake was used to its maximum. The CBR also grounded its foot-peg quite hard as I crested a rise and hurled it into the thrillingly blind third-gear right-hander that followed, confident in the super-grippy Michelin Pilot Sports' ability to take the abuse. U.S.-spec bikes will come with Bridgestone, Dunlop or Michelin tires.

Further suspension tweaking helped, and the Honda worked well enough on the track to suggest that it will be significantly closer to its racier 600cc rivals (in Europe, at least) when the

Supersport battle is rejoined in the coming months. Out on the road, too, the CBR proved predictably competent, coping effortlessly with everything from 150 mph-plus speeds on a deserted straight to tight and bumpy hairpin bends in the hills north of Almeria.

Despite the bike's more aggressive look, it seemed every bit as practical and comfortable as before. That typically efficient Honda fuel injection was as much appreciated when pulling out to overtake a Spanish truck as it was when exiting the circuit's tricky second-gear chicane. That's the Honda CBR600 for you: a true jack-of-all-trades and pretty much master of them all, too. And it's distinctly more entertaining on the way. I was aware of that

slight midrange induction growl the first time I pulled away on the road. Although this Honda doesn't stir the senses quite like Kawasaki's throatier ZX-6R, its slightly racier feel provided some welcome extra personality.

In the end, that's probably where the CBR600F4i gains most over its predecessor. The engine's changes will quite likely prove invaluable in next season's World Supersport championship—and undoubtedly help in U.S. Supersport competition. But even if this latest model is only barely faster in the real world, it looks and feels as though it is. The CBR600 has always been a bike that commands respect for its all-around ability; a machine that appeals to the head. That remains true, but this time around it also put feelings of pure lust in my heart. After 14 years, the CBR600 has finally come of age.

MC

Honda CBR600F4i

PRICE

MSRP \$8199

ENGINE

Type	liquid-cooled inline-four
Valve arrangement	dohc, 16v
Displacement	599cc
Transmission	6-speed

CHASSIS

Weight	372 lb. (claimed dry)
Fuel capacity	4.7 gal. (18L)
Wheelbase	55.4 in. (1407mm)
Seat height	32.4 in. (823mm)

Triumph Bonneville

Experiencing the Bonnie on its home turf

By Roland Brown

FIRST RIDE



IT WAS A TYPICAL BONNEVILLE EXPERIENCE. WITH MY chin on the tank and my right wrist winding the throttle to its stop, I glanced repeatedly from road to speedometer and back again as the needle crept toward the magical ton on a short, straight stretch of road outside Oxford in the English Midlands.

Normally the new Bonnie would top 100 mph pretty easily, but on a blustery autumn day, with my bulky jacket and rucksack to spoil the airflow, there wasn't much acceleration left above 95 mph. The cars ahead got closer and for a moment I thought the Triumph wouldn't get there in time. The needle crept past 97...98...99...and finally Ton Up!—just before I had to slow.

Throttling back and sitting up with a big grin, I couldn't help recalling the first time I ever got a bike above 100 mph, more than 20 years ago aboard my own aging 650cc T120 Bonneville. In many respects my leaky and unreliable 1966-model Bonnie was similar to this new machine, but I hadn't expected to recreate the old bike's finest moment in such a vivid way.

The Bonneville was the old Triumph firm's most famous model, and one of its longest lasting. It was launched in 1959 as a high-performance, twin-carbureted version of Triumph's 650cc parallel-twin, the Tiger 110, and was called the T120 Bonneville to denote its 120-mph (well, almost) top speed. That original T120 Bonnie produced 46 hp, hot stuff for a Brit twin, and was the YZF-R1 of its day, billed by Triumph as having "the highest performance available today from a standard production motorcycle."

Triumph has made every effort to ensure that this new bike jogs the memories of all those for whom the Bonneville name still has a real magic. The new Bonnie's look mirrors that of a late-1960s T120, from its air-cooled parallel-twin engine and peashooter pipes to the two-tone paint scheme and "eyebrow" tank badge. Although the new 790cc motor has eight valves and twin overhead cams instead of four valves and pushrods, its look is impressively authentic. The cam-chain is hidden between the cylinders, and an oil return tube at the front of the motor does a pretty good impersonation of an old-style pushrod shroud. One thing Triumph's engineers couldn't recreate, at least legally, was the sound of an old Bonnie. This one fired up with a typical blend of mechanical whirring and overhead-cam whine, sounding disappointingly bland. Triumph makes slightly shorter (though not street-legal) accessory mufflers, which also add a useful 10 hp.

The newcomer's sound might not match the original article's, but its performance certainly does. Triumph makes much of the fact that 90 percent of the Bonneville's peak torque output of 45.7 foot-pounds is delivered between 2750 rpm and the rev limit. On the road you get effortless acceleration, instant response through the



midrange, plus enough low-rev grunt that you can come right down to 30 mph in top gear and still accelerate at a reasonably rapid rate.

At 451 pounds dry, the Bonneville isn't particularly light but it doesn't feel like a heavy bike. Just twist the grip and that grunty motor sends it shooting off, regardless of revs. There's a slight quickening at about 75 mph as it heads toward a probable top speed of 115 mph. More to the point, the Bonnie felt as though it would happily sit at an indicated 85 mph, uphill and downhill, until the 4.3-gallon tank ran dry. (That'll be about every 120 miles.)

Given the new bike's old-fashioned geometry (29-degree steering-head angle and 117mm of trail), I'd expected its steering to be distinctly slow. But the Triumph was easy to flick through the many bends and roundabouts on the A44 launch route through the Midlands. This was partly because the fork is a bit too soft and so dived quite a bit, quickening the steering under braking. The brakes themselves worked well, especially the front, which was powerful by single-disc standards. For a bike of this type, cornering clearance is good, with just the folding rests touching down unless you're going pretty fast. Although relatively narrow by sportbike standards, the 19-inch front and 17-inch rear Bridgestones stuck quite well.

The new Bonnie works best at a leisurely pace, though, cruising gently along with its rider enjoying the scenery and the bike's docile power delivery and neutral handling. This Triumph Bonneville is not destined to become a performance legend like its famous namesake. But it is a capable, simple-yet-practical bike with the bonus of a uniquely nostalgic charm and a good price (\$6999 in the United States). And that is likely to make it the Hinckley factory's most successful bike yet. **MC**

Triumph Bonneville

PRICE

MSRP **\$6999**

ENGINE

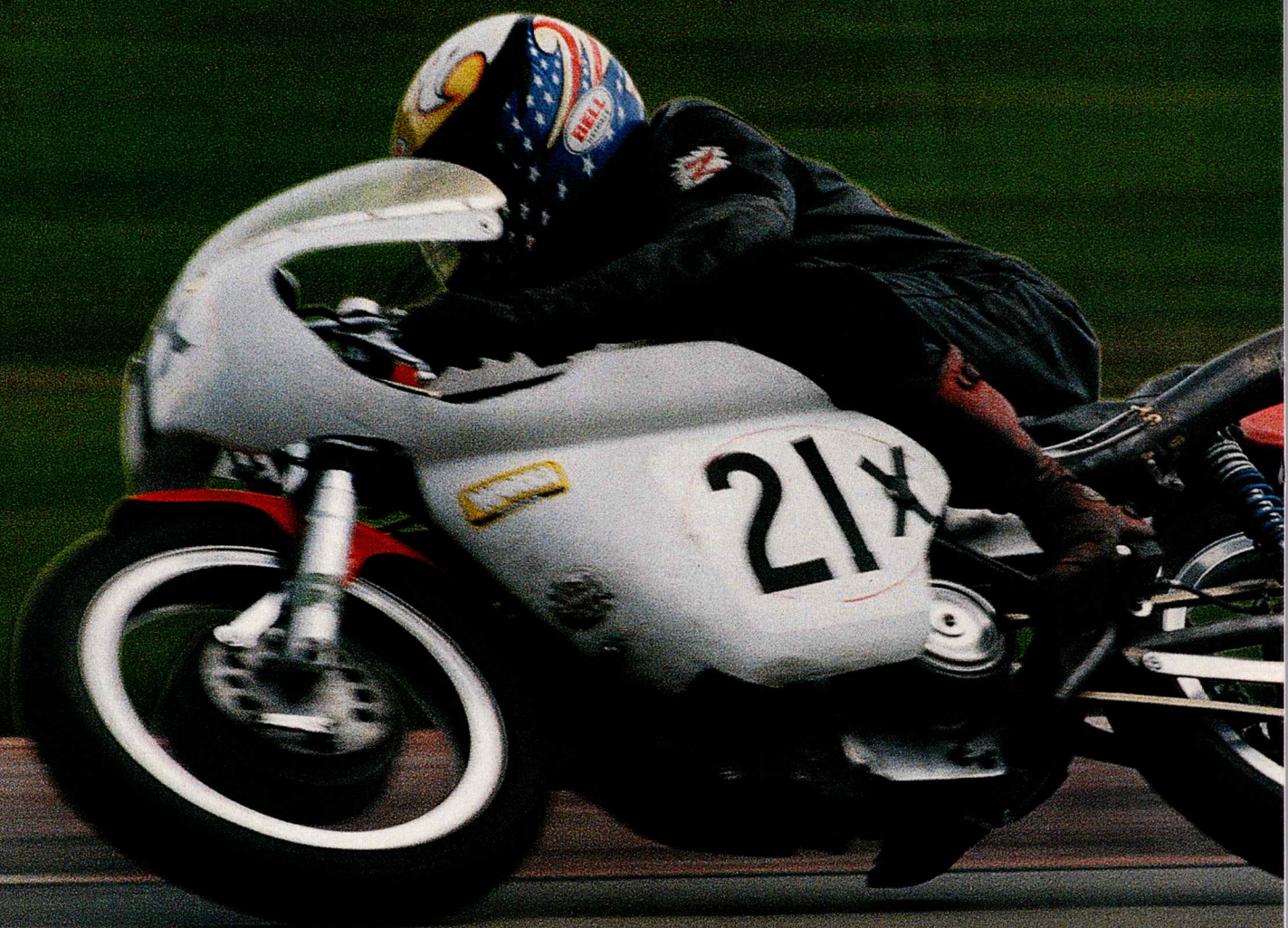
Type **air-cooled parallel-twin**
Valve arrangement **dohc, 8v**
Displacement **790cc**
Transmission **5-speed**

CHASSIS

Weight **451 lb. (claimed dry)**
Fuel capacity **4.3 gal. (16L)**
Wheelbase **57.0 in. (1448mm)**
Seat height **31.5 in. (800mm)**

Art and the Zen of

Vintage



Racing

AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days proves it's not whether your investment appreciates, it's whether you appreciate your investment

Story And Photographs By Mark Gardiner

ON CERTAIN LATE AFTERNOONS IN JULY, THERE'S A FLAT-CALM POINT where you realize, hot as the day's been, you're not going to get that thunderstorm. Big cumulonimbus clouds, all puff and bluster, just dissipate. In Galion, Ohio, the sun slants in and lights up the tile and neon facade of the old movie house. The marquee, which should feature a James Dean flick, advertises a church bazaar instead. The "Galion" has been closed for years, since they put up an eight-screen multiplex at the mall on the edge of town. That's progress.

Bill and I stop to admire the building. It's Egyptian-influenced art deco, he explains—architecture inspired by the media frenzy that accompanied the opening of King Tut's tomb back in the 1920s. You learn these things when you travel with an art historian. But we're in search of motorcycle—not art—history.

Every July, the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course hosts AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, making the whole area a mecca for motorcyclists—especially those who do not necessarily believe that newer is always better. There's a lot of them, too. Weeks before the event, every motel within 30 miles of the track was booked solid.

A pickup truck cruises by, with a Ducati Darmah SS in the back. Bill (his weekend ride is a '72 Ducati 750) nods to it, "Darmah. A good sign."

"What does *darmah* mean, anyway?" I ask. "Is it something like karma?"

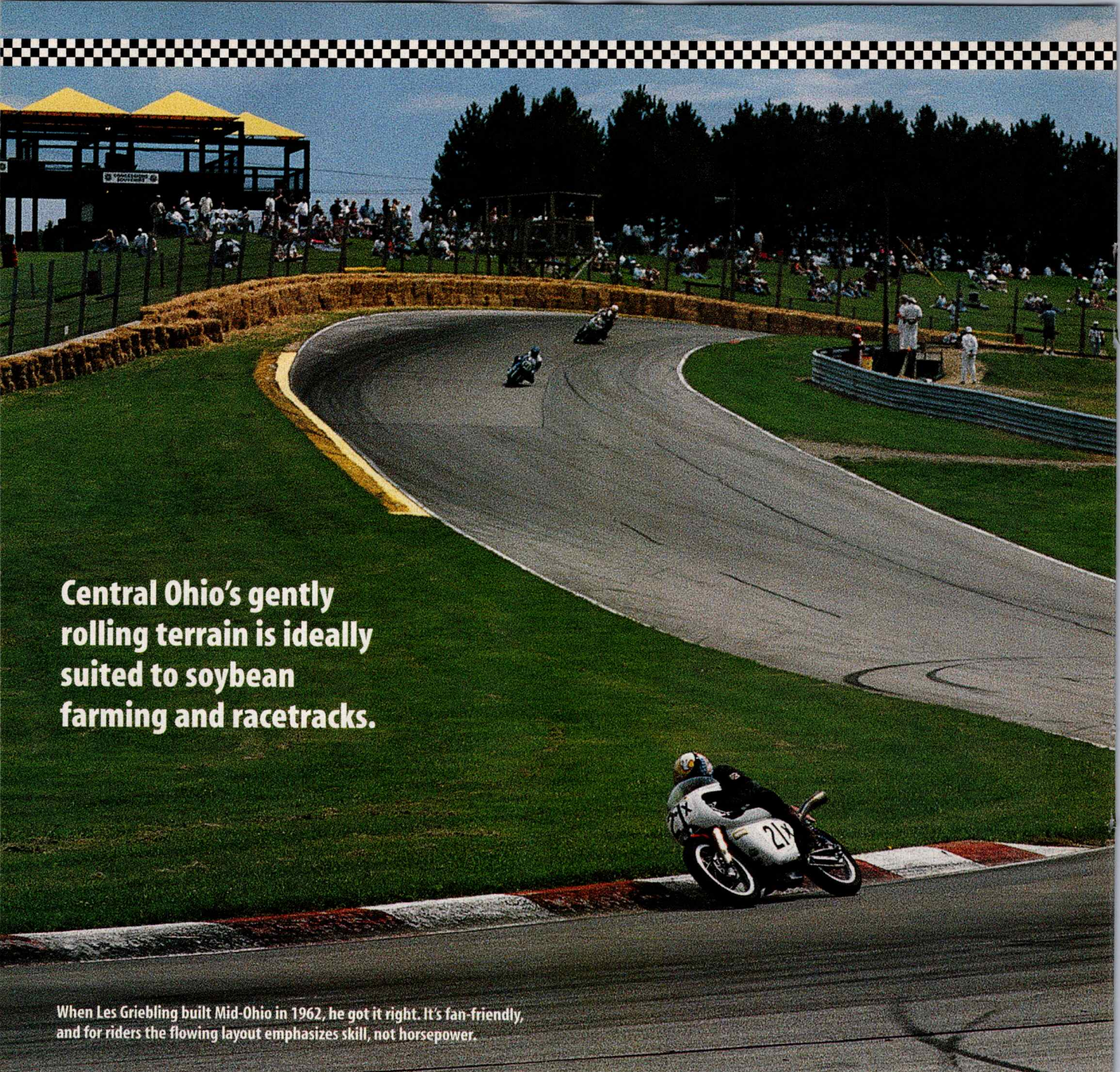
"You idiot," he says, "Italians don't believe in karma." We head off in search of the motel.

Central Ohio's gently rolling terrain is ideally suited to soybean farming and racetracks. When



Main image: Artist Larry Poons draws a clean line through the "esses." Clockwise from above: It's '71 again; you're 21 again; your waist is 31 again; whatever you're paying for the feeling, it's worth it. Ohio is the buckle of the "Rust Belt." During Vintage Motorcycle Days you can ride back to a time before the industrial belt got rusty. With 700-plus vendors, the needle you need is somewhere in this haystack.





Central Ohio's gently rolling terrain is ideally suited to soybean farming and racetracks.

When Les Griebling built Mid-Ohio in 1962, he got it right. It's fan-friendly, and for riders the flowing layout emphasizes skill, not horsepower.

we reach the track we find some shade, park and head for the pits. Bill is eager to hook up with Larry Poons, who races a Seeley G50 in AHRMA's Premier 500 class.

Back in the '60s and '70s, Poons was one of the preeminent painters on the heady New York modern-art scene. We find him sharing Domiracer's pit, but he's scheduled to go out in the next practice. It may *only* be vintage racing, but Poons definitely has his race face on. We decide to come back later.

Everywhere we look, the huge facility is jammed with motorcycles. There's an auction tent, concourse area, trials demo and single-marque clubs in the infield. The swap meet has swollen to more than 700 vendors. Treasure dug out of basements, garages

Treasure dug out of basements, garages and barns across the country have been brought here, and are spread over an area the size of several football fields.

and barns across the country have been brought here, and are spread over an area the size of several football fields. That one last part you need to finish the restoration project you started in 1989? It's here. In the original package, probably.

To the west, there's another massive paddock area for motocrossers and trials riders,

and a campground. A mint Honda CBX? Triumph Bonneville? BMW R90S? They've been ridden here by the dozens; you wouldn't even look twice. Benelli Sei? Indian Sport Scout? Ariel Square Four? After an hour on the grounds, you'd shift your eyes, but might not even bother turning your head. As we walk back to meet up with Poons, someone putts through the paddock on a 1920s-era Neracar; part motorcycle, part La-Z-Boy, part mosquito fogger.



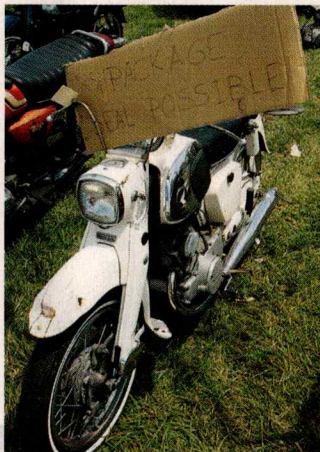
Even in this jaded state, I have to admit that's pretty cool.

Larry Poons graduated from high school in 1955, in Great Neck, New York. "We got bikes about two minutes after seeing *The Wild One*," he freely admits. Within a decade, Poons was on the art A-list, with shows in major galleries and reviews in all the right magazines. "The first bike I really loved was a Norton International," he says. "When I started selling paintings, I built a Manx with a G50 engine; then I tried a Norton twin engine in it, but it was never quite right."

His Brando-esque image didn't seem to hurt his art career: A 1972 review in the *New York Times* described Poons as having "a sort of soap opera career." That year, he bought his Seeley G50.



TOM RILES



Clockwise from above right: You've had a project sitting in your garage for years, while you searched for one final part. If the part you need is here, the fine line between junk and treasure is drawn right through the middle of this table. Sunday afternoon: Campers pack up for the ride back home, back to the present day, and worst of all, back to a world where cars outnumber bikes. One of the first heats is waved off at the Ashland County Fairground; the grandstand was still packed at midnight. Someone could still, we're sure, meet the nicest people on this Honda.





Clockwise from above: With tools, fuel and his G50 packed into this aging van, Poons could be running away to join the "continental circus," if only he could find a road back to the 1960s. "Sometimes," said Sigmund Freud, "a cigar is just a cigar," but a motorcycle is rarely just a motorcycle: Ken Browde (on bike) lusts after Don Biltz's Honda S90. Dick Zrubek searched out a '49 Harley-Davidson WR similar to the one he first raced half a century ago. Now he rides with his late wife's kerchief in the inside pocket of his leathers. Robert Litten rode his KR to third in the Classic 500/750 class at Ashland.

"Finally!" he says, "Someone built the bike I'd always wanted."

Poons was one of only seven people to take up Colin Seeley's offer of the "Condor," basically a G50 with lights. He raced it a few times in the old AAMRA up at Laconia, then rode it on the street for 25 years. "A few years ago, I had to rebuild it, and decided to set it up as a racebike." He neglects to mention that he won the AHRMA 500 premier championship on the bike in 1998.

Poons's 30-year relationship with one dream machine is not typical. At Vintage Motorcycle Days, most people seem to be searching for a past they either had and lost—or one they never had at all. And their lust objects need not be as exotic as Seeley Condors. Ken Browde is 50 years old. He owns six bikes and came down from Illinois looking for, of all things, a Honda S-90.

"The first bike I rode was a C-102 step-through. Then I moved up to the Super 90," he says. "When I got married, my wife believed that motorcycles were not consistent with extended life. She had this idea that I was worth more to her alive than dead, and she made me sell my bike." Wryly, he adds, "It turns out I was worth more divorced than married! Now I've got a restored C-102 in my living room, and a significant other that loves motorcycles." He avows that, this time, he'll keep both forever.

Browde found a mint S-90 at the



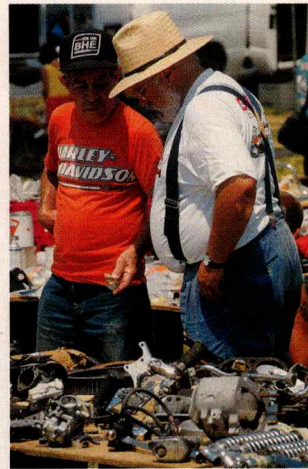
swap meet, where it was being sold by Don Biltz, of Middletown, Ohio. "Right now," as Browde put it, "my heart is having a battle with my wallet." I left them haggling.

Friday evening: dirttrack racing, county fairground. The road north is lined with corn that's already as high as an elephant's eye. We pass an Amish horse-drawn buggy parked in front of Home Depot. It's a traditional part of the country, for sure; a local health food store is promoting a special on bratwurst. Bratwurst. Health food. No kidding.

The sun sets on a packed grandstand; the lights come on. You can't read "Ashland" on the water tower anymore, it's just a black silhouette on an indigo horizon. The air is redolent of fresh pizza and old horses. From all over the pits, we hear the "scrape-clunk" of racers' steel shoes.

Donnie Warf rode pro in the '70s; now he's an AHRMA fast guy. He isn't just riding the make and model he dreamed of as a kid, he's riding the actual bike. As he explains it, "I grew up near Dalton, Georgia, which was a hotbed of flattrack racing. I idolized Dale Singleton—he was a pig farmer who won the Daytona 200—and this Dick Mann Replica was his bike. When he died, his sponsors gave the bike to me, and I used it, eventually winning the AHRMA Classic 250 championship in '93.





Clockwise from top left: Auctioneer Jerry Wood. Maico rider Gig Hamilton, from Osceola Mills, Pennsylvania. Rider displacement may increase over time. Despite this practice mishap, Mr. Wilson won in Class C. Action in 250 GP. Jack Morris, on his '15 Harley-Davidson: "I have to kick it like I'm really mad at it."

"When I won my #1 plate," he added, "it was presented to me by Dick Mann, and he signed my bike." His tone of voice is reverential, "This bike is my pride and joy; I wouldn't sell it for anything." It's past midnight, and the racing's still going on when Bill and I finally have our fill of motorcycles, and head back to the motel.

Saturday, I'm back prowling the swap meet, keeping an eye peeled for better pipes for my '74 Honda CL450. I find a set, but gamble that the price'll come down if they don't sell today. I stop to admire an Evinrude auxiliary motor fitted to a prewar bicycle. It's the property of Kenny Thomas, age 62. He and his wife park their motorhome right here in the swap meet. He hands me his card, which describes the family business as "T-shirts/Caps/Whizzer parts." He explains, "I've been riding since 1951. My first bike was a 1949 Whizzer. I was a BSA—then, later, a Honda—dealer, but I sold the shop in '76. Now we come to a few of these events a year, just trying to break even, selling T-shirts and buying and selling Whizzer parts."

As we stand there talking, I'm glad to note that several other people make the same error I did: confusing his meticulous '49 Whizzer for one of the replicas that are now back on the market.

The motel parking lot is full of bikes, the guys sitting next to us at breakfast are wearing Penton T-shirts. It's like taking a vacation to a parallel universe where everyone likes motorcycles as much as we do.

"Oh, they're just not the same," he says, pooh-poohing the reproductions. But he adds with a rueful laugh, "I don't like to think about the time and money I spent restoring this one."

Saturday afternoon. The tent is packed with bodies, but at least there's shade. Auctioneer Jerry Wood has a revivalist's fervent conviction that for every vintage motorcycle there is, somewhere, a thrilled buyer.

He's on a first-name basis with the dealers sitting up front, and occasionally breaks his patter to try to strike a deal directly between buyer and seller. Bidding for a Vetter Triumph triple stalls out at \$4500, a grand short of the reserve. Wood looks over his reading glasses from the high bidder to the seller, "Will you split it?" he asks. The bidder agrees to \$5000 and a chant goes up in the crowd: "Sell, sell, sell!" But the seller sticks to his reserve, and they groan as the bike is rolled away.

High-dollar bids for museum-quality machines earn a round of applause from the crowd, though most of them aren't actually bidding. Every now and then a nice bike, put in without a reserve, goes for a few hundred bucks. These sales trigger a round of anxious murmuring as the collective realizes, "Hey, wait a minute, I could have bought that!" One thing's clear, most bids on professionally restored bikes aren't covering the cost of the restoration. This might trouble would-be investors, but it doesn't bother me. Woe is the day when people think, "My bike's too valuable to ride."

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Vintage Racing

Sunday morning, before leaving for the track, we turn on the TV and check the Weather Channel. "Maybe they'll give us the 'Jetting Report,'" Bill jokes. But during Vintage Motorcycle Days, it almost seems possible. The motel parking lot is full of bikes, the guys sitting next to us at breakfast are wearing Penton T-shirts. It's like taking a vacation to a parallel universe where everyone likes motorcycles as much as we do.

Jack Morris came to Mid-Ohio with his 1915 Harley-Davidson "Silent Gray Fellow." "Nowadays, people don't believe me when I tell them about the 'total loss' oil system," the septuagenarian complains. His voice may be shaky, but his memory isn't. I ask him about his first bike. "My dad bought me a 1941 Cushman scooter,"



**Frank admits that
his 35 bikes—
including almost
every 250cc MXer
on the market
in the year 1974—
now fill most of the
rooms in his house.**

he says. "I sold it to buy a Model-A Ford, and I was sorry the next day." "Have you ever thought about finding another one?" I ask. "Oh I did! I looked for an identical one for 40 years, but a few years ago I finally found it!" he says, "Wait here while I get my photo album." A middle-aged guy who's doing the breakfast dishes (I think he's Jack's son) rolls his eyes upon hearing this turn in the conversation. He gives me a "now you're in for it" look.

Next to the motocross course, campers are packing up for the trip home. A woman in her 40s pauses while jamming a sleeping bag into a stuff sack. She's ridden up the spine of the Appalachians all the way from Florida. She's pretty enough to make me think: 1) I'm actually getting to like being middle-aged; and 2) The line,

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"I'm working for a magazine—can I take your picture?" sounds just as cheesy now (when it's true) as it did 20 years ago (when it was a lie). I couldn't bring myself to use it again at middle age, so you'll have to use your imagination.

Just up the hill, John Stackus, 46, and Frank Weir, 49, are packing up after a weekend of riding motocross and prowling the swap meet. Frank admits that his 35 bikes—including almost every 250cc MXer on the market in the year 1974—now fill most of the rooms in his house.

"My dad bought me a 1941 Cushman scooter," he says. "I sold it to buy a Model-A Ford, and I was sorry the next day."

When I tell him that, even by the standards of Vintage Motorcycle Days, that sounds a tad obsessive, he defends himself by saying, "Well, John's got about 16 bikes. Of course, he's got a wife and kids, so he's limited."

By midafternoon the swap meet's wound down. I go back, with half a mind to buy those pipes for my street scrambler, but the vendor is gone. Scattered across the huge field are a handful of diehards going for one more sale or staring, shoulders slumped, at loads patently larger than their trucks can carry.

Down in the paddock, Larry Poons has loaded his battered van. Still wiry in his 60s, tugging at tiedowns on his G50 and Ducati Diana, it's easy to imagine him as a privateer from Grand Prix "continental circus" days of the 1960s.

Could he afford to race modern bikes? Would they be faster? Sure. But I stumbled across this Poons quote in a 1970 issue of the highbrow magazine *Artforum*: "A friend of mine once said, talking about a very good painter's work, talking about a series of paintings, 'They look awful, but they never got worse.' Bad paintings just get worse and worse. Others can stay terrible for 20 years, but at least they never get worse; and joyfully, some get better."

It seems even more applicable now. Paint (like metal) oxidizes, but that's not why paintings get better. They get better because we can finally appreciate them. **MC**

Mark Gardiner is the author of the book Classic Motorcycles, and living proof you can get an AMA Expert license for good attendance alone. His first motorcycle was a Puch Condor. This is his second feature for Motorcyclist.

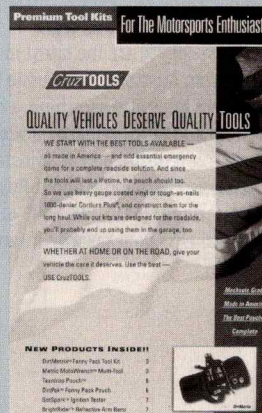
info page

1



CLASSIC GOGGLES' collection of authentic and vintage riding gear includes goggles, leather helmets and gauntlets. Prescription goggles are also available. **(Free)**

2



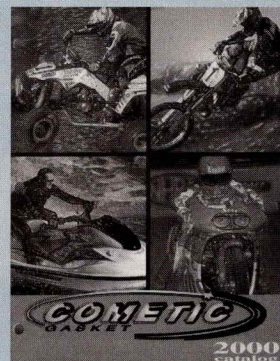
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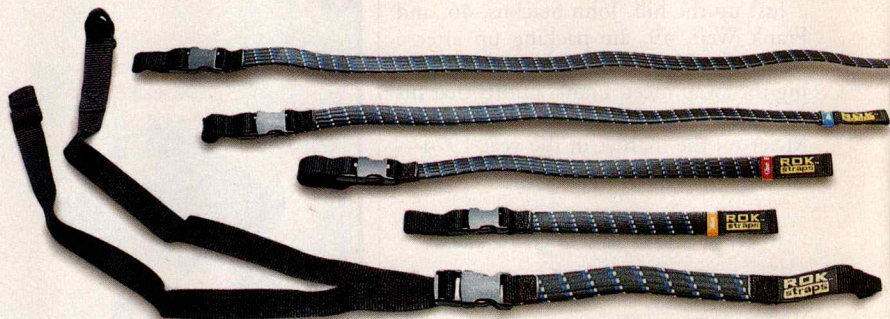


gear box

Compiled By Garrett Kai. Photography By James Brown

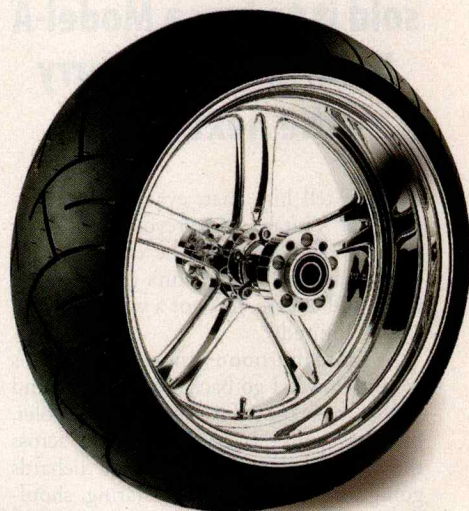
Rok Straps

Rok Straps (\$5.99–\$9.99) are the latest in motorcycle luggage straps from Australia. This Aussie import features a flat shock cord to minimize squishing, a closed-end fastening system and quick-release buckles. Rok Straps are available in five lengths, and in adjustable and non-adjustable versions. Learn more about Rok Straps from European Accessories at (510) 728-8005 or type in www.rokstraps.com on your favorite Internet portal.



Spidi Slider Race Suit

What jumps 10 feet in the air, lives in Australia and makes for great roadracing suits? Kangaroos! (PETA members save your letters.) Spidi has just introduced what it calls the finest in racing apparel: the Slider Race Suit. Constructed of kangaroo skin, the \$1649.95 Slider Suit features CE-certified armor, boomerang knee sliders, Kepro-teck Kevlar inserts and an aerodynamic racing hump (as seen in World GP and Superbike competition). Why kangaroo skin? Simple: It offers as much abrasion and tear resistance as cowhide, in a thinner hide. The Slider Race Suit is available in sizes 48–58 and comes in four color combinations. Get info about Spidi's complete 2001 lineup at (800) 221-7291, or go to www.lockhartphillipsusa.com.



Performance Machine Phat Wheel

Is the custom trend toward superfat wheels getting ridiculous? Maybe. But they sure look neat. Performance Machine's new Phat Wheel (\$1195) measures an enormous 8.5-inches wide, is polished to a mirrorlike finish, and designed to take advantage of a new generation of supersized 18-inch tires on the market. While you'll probably need a custom swingarm, the Phat Wheel *will* turn heads at your local hangout. Find out more by calling (714) 523-3000 or logging on at www.performancemachine.com.

Bug Eyes Mirrors

They *do* look a little strange. But hey, if Bug Eyes Mirrors (\$9.95) help you check your "six" a bit better, we're all for it. Bug Eyes were created by a group of snowmobile enthusiasts who needed a better way to keep track of other riders. Bug Eyes mirrors use a glass lens, have a double swivel mount, and can be attached to any helmet with self-adhesive mounting. Call (800) 273-9887 or surf to www.bugeyes.com for more information.



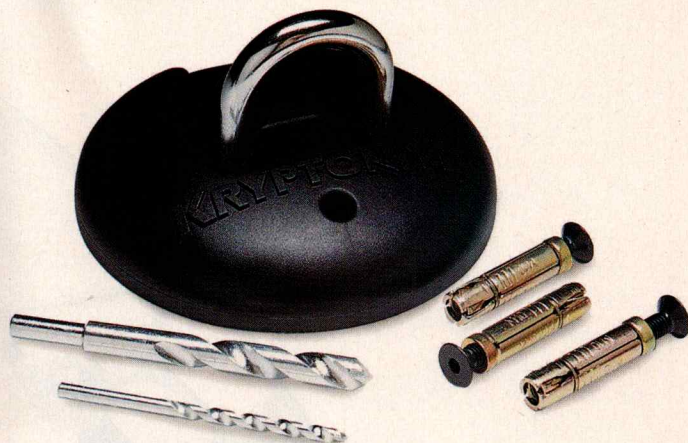


Aprilia Gear

Hey look, it's Troy Corser! OK, we're just kidding—but you *can* look like a member of the factory race team with the latest gear from Aprilia. Deck yourself out with the Aprilia Anorak Jacket (\$189.95), a mock turtleneck (\$34.95), or simply cover your dome with the Aprilia Racing Hat (\$16.95). The jacket and turtleneck come in sizes S–XXL and are only available in black. Grab your gear at any authorized Aprilia dealer or give 'em a call at (770) 592-2261; www.aprilia.com.

Kryptonite Stronghold Anchor System

You can stop would-be thieves with the Stronghold Anchor System from Kryptonite. The Kryptonite System bolts into the floor of your garage, wall or truck bed and allows your motorcycle to be secured to a fixed point using a chain or cable, thus reducing the risk of lift- or roll-away theft. The Stronghold features a hardened carbon/alloy/steel anchor ring, and comes with everything you need to install the system—all for just \$74.95. Call (800) SAY-LOCK for the Kryptonite dealer near you, or check out www.kryptonitelock.com.



Spidi Carbotech Gloves

Today's top-shelf race gloves can be way pricey. But at a reasonable \$124.95, Spidi's Carbotech gloves offer a surprisingly high level of protection and comfort. The Italian-made Carbotechs require very little break-in, and have held up well after a year of constant use and abuse. The foam-rubber-backed carbon/Kevlar hard armor allows a full range of movement, while the extended gauntlet and hook-and-loop closure keep drafts out. Protection should be excellent (though we've not crashed in them), with Kevlar-reinforced padding on all sides of the glove. These Spidis are some of the most comfortable gloves we've tested.

PRICE: \$124.95

RATING: ★★★★★

VERDICT: A good combination of protection, style and comfort at an affordable price.

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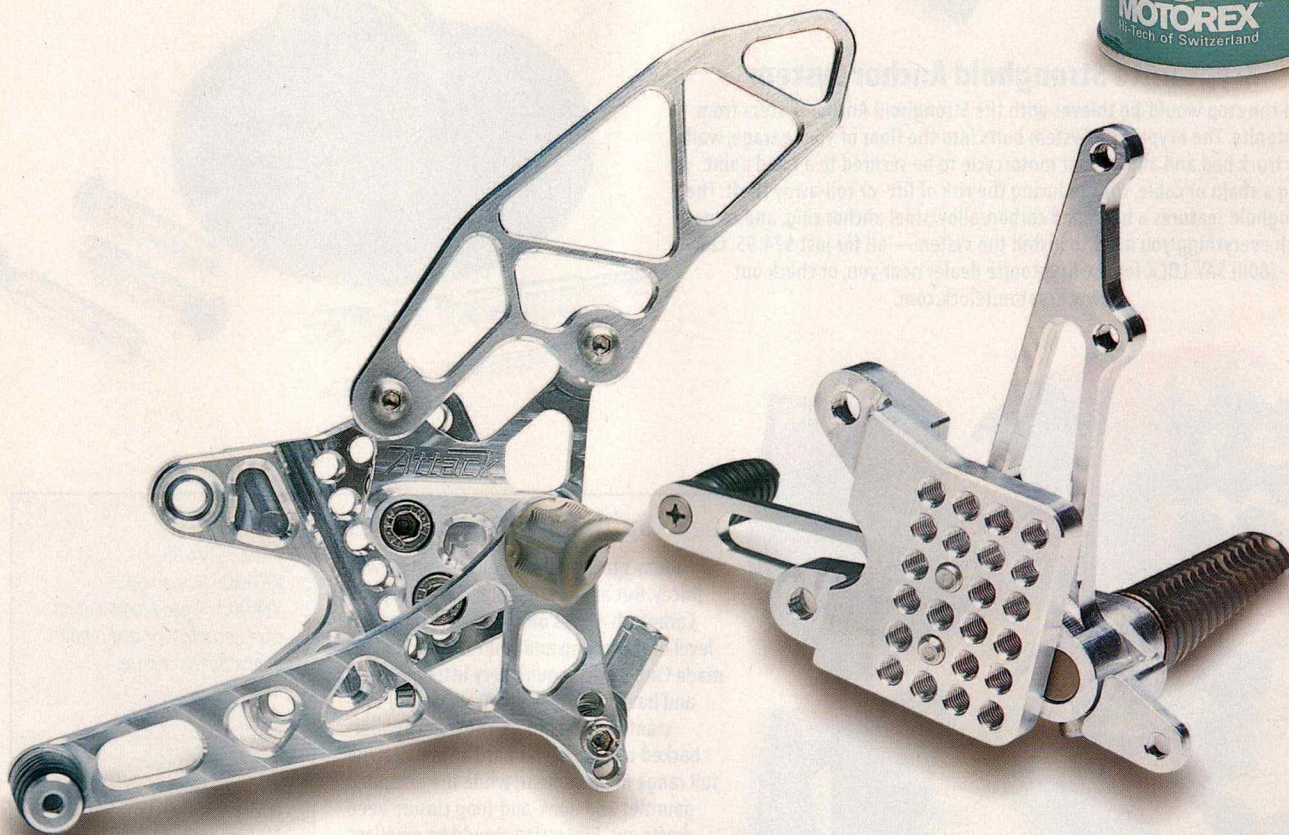
gear box



Photon II Micro-Lights

They might be no heavier than a quarter, but Photon II Micro-Lights are a lot more useful in the dark. The unbreakable LED bulbs are visible from more than a mile away, powered by replaceable lithium batteries, and are guaranteed to never burn out. Choose from seven flavors of illumination and two types of activation (squeeze or switch on). Suggested retail is just 20 bucks. Contact Essential Gear for the lowdown on Micro-Lights at (800) 582-3861 or click on www.essentialgear.com.

Motorex Joker 440
Quick, Boy Wonder, to the bat cave! Seriously, Joker 440 (\$7.99) is the latest in synthetic spray lubricants from the Swedish scientists over at Motorex. Joker 440 is a fully synthetic spray lube that helps protect against corrosion, cable binding and all sorts of moving-metal-part hiccups. The stuff also displaces water. Check with your local dealer or call Euroline at (845) 228-0145.



Attack Rearsets

"Mmmmm, beautifully carved billet, super-precise movements, carbon fiber... doughnut scent." OK, now that Homer Simpson is done fondling the swag, we can show you Attack Performance's latest rearsets, which are machined from 7000-series aluminum, have fully adjustable footpegs and levers, feature carbon-fiber heel guards, bolt on easily, and retail for \$495. Attack rearsets are available for most sportbikes, and can be found at (562) 903-7757 or on the Internet at www.attackperformance.com.

Techtronics Quickshifter

Clutch? We don't need no steenkin' clutch! Thanks to the Techtronics quickshifter (\$425–\$475), precise clutchless upshifts are easier than ever. The Techtronics system uses a fully adjustable pressure-sensing rod to detect the extra load of the shifter, which cuts the ignition system for a fraction of a second, allowing full-throttle clutchless upshifts. The British-made kit includes everything you need for installation. To find out more call Al Gillen at Williamsville Competition (716) 537-2534 or browse online at www.techtronics.co.uk.



Diadora H2 Kevlar Waterproof Boots

Keep your footsies warm and dry this winter with the latest waterproof boots from Diadora. The H2 Kevlar boots are constructed of antiscratch leather and Kevlar gussets in the ankle and heel. The waterproof liner, nonskid sole and gearshift pad combine to create a top-notch all-weather boot. Get H2 Kevlar boots in black only in sizes 36–47 (U.S. sizes 3.5–12) for \$219.95. Check 'em out at (800) 799-9444 or browse online at www.gearboxinternational.com.

PRICE: \$327.95 (solids)
\$399.95 (replicas)

RATING: ★★★★★

VERDICT: Good-fitting, light lid but cheapish shield mechanism.

GEARBOX INTERNATIONAL
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Suomy Gunwind Helmet

You can buy a cheap helmet, or you can buy an expensive helmet—but there aren't many cheap expensive helmets. Suomy's Gunwind isn't exactly cheap, but \$327.95 isn't bad for a higher-end hat. You get a very comfy and lightweight lid, with a Kevlar/carbon-fiber shell. The interior's plush, though not removable, and Suomy economized in the shield-mechanism department; you can't crack the visor to get a little air, as the first detent opens an inch-wide gap right under your nose. Otherwise the hat's fine. The graphics are decals covered in a UV-resistant clearcoat, and the helmet's approved by our very own DOT and the British BSI. Bonus: Each Gunwind comes with a Fog City fog shield. **MC**



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Performance Marketplace advertising space is available in 1" to 3" units. Minimum insertion is 3 issues within contract year. Rates below are for black and white units on a per-ad basis. Please call for rates on 2-color and 4-color ads. Rates are effective with the January 2000 issue.

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For additional info, contact Direct Marketing Division, *Motorcyclist* Marketplace, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515; (323) 782-2535.

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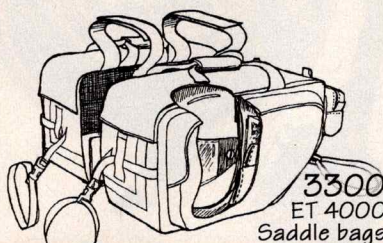
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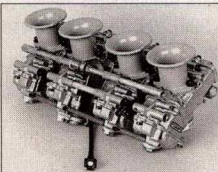
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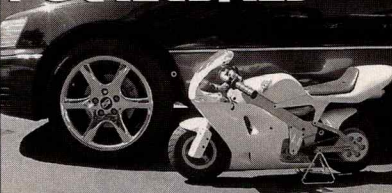
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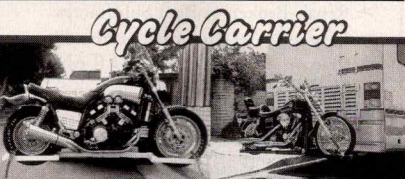
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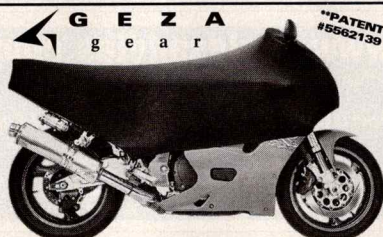
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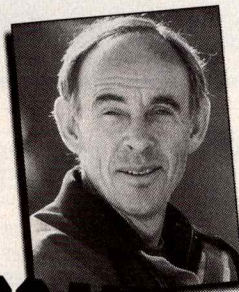
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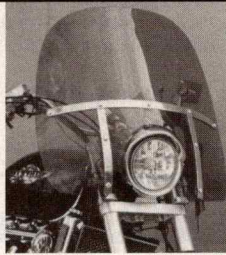
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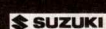
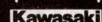
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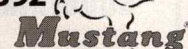
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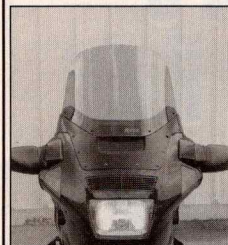
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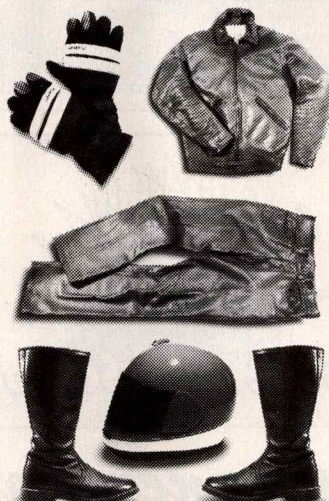


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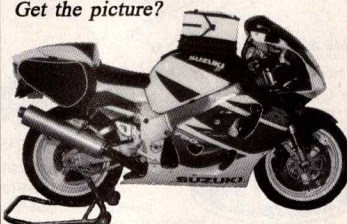


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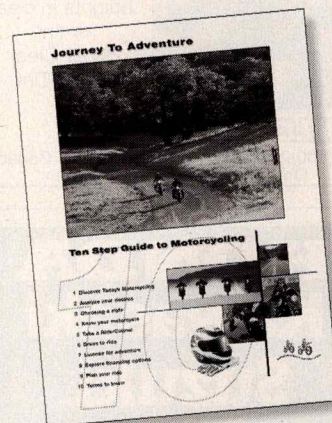
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backfires

continued from page 14

TECHNIQUE

I'm a traffic-collision reconstruction specialist with a police department specializing in motorcycle accidents. Your article on Lane Position [November 2000] was right on target. Last year I investigated a collision in which a motorcycle rider was killed, and his grandson passenger critically injured, in a head-on collision with a pickup. The rider was going through a left-hand curve at the speed limit (35 mph) but was traveling in the left third of his lane. A pickup truck driven by an impaired driver came from the opposite direction. The truck crossed the centerline and hit the bike; the rider didn't stand a chance. Reconstruction of the wreck revealed that the rider had just two seconds from point of possible perception to impact. In that short time he was able to get on the back brake and start a slide that saved his grandson's life (causing the rear of the bike to slide to the right and miss the impact with the truck).

The driver of the truck had a blood alcohol level of 0.08, and also tested positive for marijuana. He was charged with manslaughter, convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Convicting the driver will not bring the rider back, but educating the riding public can help prevent future tragedies. Thanks for the informative article.

Dave Rochford
Anchorage Police Department
Anchorage, AK

NEW BIKE BLUES

I recently completed a motorcycle-safety course and am planning to buy my first bike this spring. I like the new Honda F4i. My question is this: I'm five-foot-nine and weigh about 210 pounds. Would the F4i be too small for me? My friends tell me I'd need at least a 750cc.

Michael Dade
Via e-mail

The F4i would fit you fine, Michael, and although it's a thoroughly high-performance motorcycle, it'd do as a first bike. Still, a smaller and lighter twin such as the 500 Ninja would likely be a better bike to learn on.—Ed



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In the February issue of

CRUISER

On Sale Mid-December

Check out the new format!

Jamie Elvidge takes over as *Motorcycle Cruiser's* new editor. Expect big things.

Her arrival has motivated a fresh, rich editorial tone in *Motorcycle Cruiser* and revitalized graphics throughout. While we will still offer comprehensive road testing, product reviews, tips, tricks and skills-development articles, there will be an air of inhibition. "The new attitude will focus on The Cruiser Experience..." says Elvidge, "the way the bike, the road and the destination make us feel."



2001 BUYER'S GUIDE

Peruse 20-plus pages of laid-back, chrome-laden cruisers. See all the new models and specs in one place, including Honda's bad-ass VTX1800, Suzuki's middleweight Volusia, three new versions of the BMW R1200C and a Yamaha Road Star with a decidedly dark side.

SIZING THEM UP

Does size matter? Of course it does. See what happens when we take five bikes and five riders of extreme dimensions cruising along the Pacific Coast.

HOLD THAT LINE

How do you handle it when your hard parts hit the pavement; when sparks are streaming off the floorboards and there's a Buick hurtling toward you in the other lane? We offer some practical reactions that might take the terror out of touching down.

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- And oh, so much more

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Suzuki GSX-R600 continued from page 56

Off the Record

cook

Age: 37
Height: 5 ft. 10 in.
Weight: 200 lb.
Inseam: 32 in.
Middleweights owned:
'84 Honda VF500F,
'89 Honda NX650,
'92 Yamaha XJ600



There's just one thing wrong with the new GSX-R600: the GSX-R750. Don't misunderstand the comparison. The little brother GSX-R is an amazing piece of work, light and fast and endowed with a silky fuel-injection system that restores my faith that injection can work on 600s. (Honda, you're next; don't screw it up.) Hard to tell before we've been on all the 2001s, but the Suzuki looks to have the moves on the R6. My problem with the 600 is that the step up the GSX-R ladder to the 750 is pretty painless—there's all of \$1500 and three pounds between them. And you get massive rewards, like 22 percent more power and significantly more low-end grunt (although the 600 is hardly willing), and a maniacal high-rev growl that the 600 only half emulates. So, yeah, I'll raid my

daughter's college fund for a grand and a half and take the 750.

—Marc Cook

boehm

Age: 38
Height: 6 ft.
Weight: 225 lb.
Inseam: 32 in.
Middleweights owned:
'78 Yamaha XS650,
'82 Kawasaki GPz550,
'84 Honda VF500F



This thing is good. Better, I think, than the current-spec (and current Class King) YZF-R6, and that's saying a lot. It makes a few more horsepower, weighs a bit less, offers roughly equal levels of comfort, is a bit roomier and—here's the biggie—makes more midrange, a huge plus when commuting and short hops enter into the equation. We've yet to sample the revised 600s from Honda and Yamaha. But unless the red and blue camps come up with highly improved versions of their current 600cc offerings (not likely since they're dealing with tweaks of current designs), the new GSX-R600 could very likely be Da Bomb.

—Mitch Boehm

rear 5.5-inch approximately four ounces lighter. Inside the rear hub, a redesigned cush drive gives a whole kilogram—2.2 pounds—less unsprung mass. New brakes, too, remove about nine ounces from the front end and three from the rear. All those grams add up to a machine that floats nicely along, yet in a firm way, if that makes any sense. The Showa men are onto something in the last year or two.

Aim the bike down a winding road and you'll appreciate the engineers' efforts even more. Downsizing the motor and shoving it a seemingly insignificant amount forward gives the thing about 2.3 times more "feel" than the old bike, and all that newfound power makes you thankful: On the old GSX-R600, you can pretty much whack the throttle open and steer. On this one, you want to exercise more finesse, as this engine does pack a bunch more grunt. And the way it steers and maintains over bumpy sections makes the old bike feel positively rubbery and lumbering. Although it doesn't turn quite as quickly as Yamaha's benchmark R6 (we think), the new one does feel every bit as light, with characteristic GSX-R-Amtrak stability.

That crispy feeling extends even to the controls, most particularly the (adjustable) front brake lever, which operates a pair of new Tokico calipers that should never need more than one finger in any but the most dire street situation; impressive-yet-never

grabby onset with linear, powerful, er, power. Aaron Yates will be happy with these. The clutch gets coil springs this year instead of the old diaphragm spring, and it feels more precise, too.

Speaking of changing perceptions, did I really write only three short years ago, that the GSX-R600 "looks like something Bimota would produce." I did. All I can say is, the drugs then must've been better than the stuff we're getting now, because this new machine's cockpit, styling and everything about it (yes there's a clock) make the old one look almost cheap. By comparison, the new bike looks like something Bimota would produce—if Bimota still does produce.

There it is, then. Let us observe a moment of mouth agapeness for the crazy kids who race these things, for if ever there was any class of motor vehicle that more closely bore out that hoariest of moto-cliches, "Racing improves the breed," then we don't know what it would be. The scary thing is this one's a much nicer *streetbike* than before too, and that's a good thing for us all.

In this case, perception is reality. As your motorcycle magazine, we advise you to blow off the counseling, tune out your spouse (the surly one with the big tail-section), and trade for the new model.

Suzuki's taken a big leap with this bike, and landed atop the 600 pile. Soon as we get new R6s and F4is and things, we'll know exactly how it stacks up.

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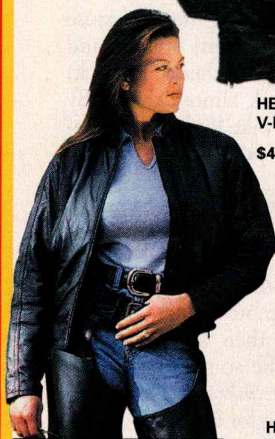
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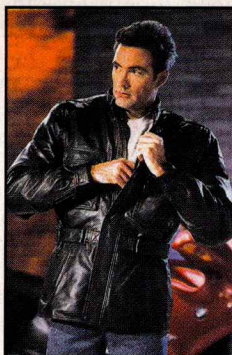
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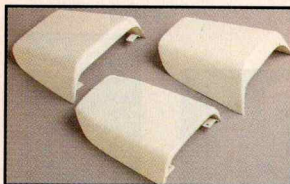
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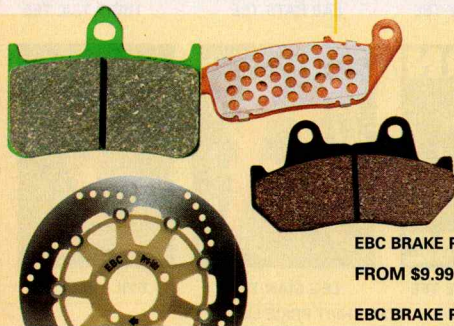
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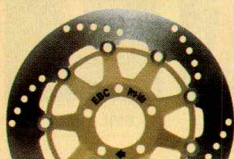
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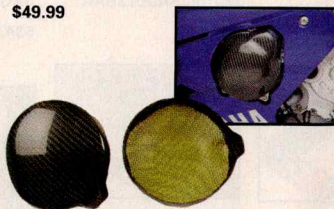
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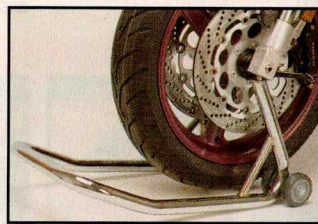
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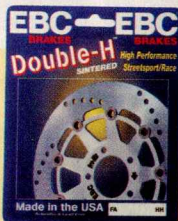
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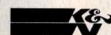
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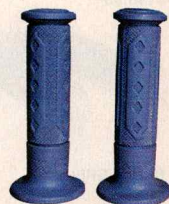
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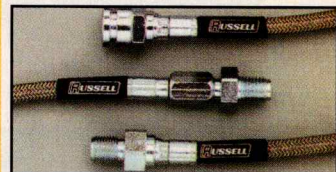
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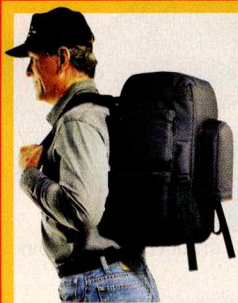


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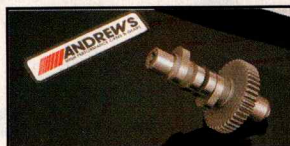


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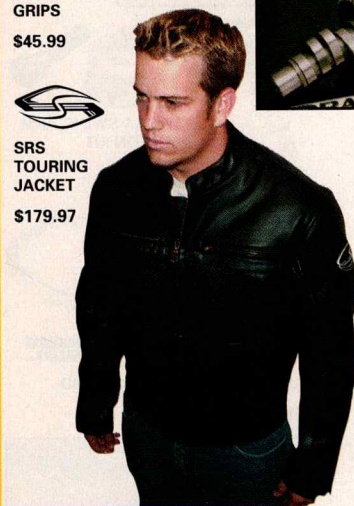


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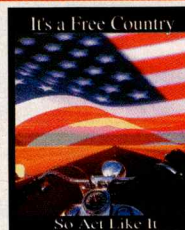
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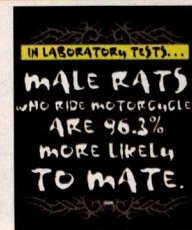
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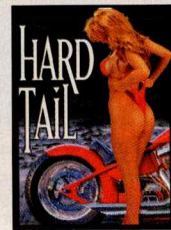
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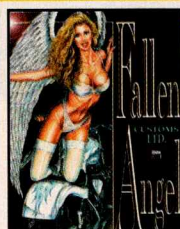
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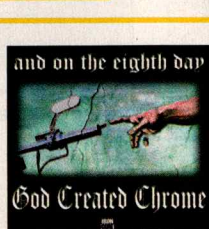
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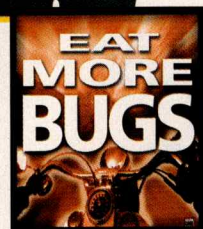
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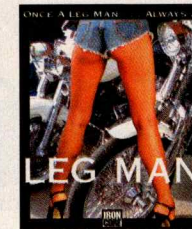
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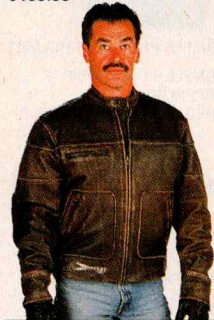
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ANTIQUE BRN SHOWN
\$389.99

DAINESE



DAINESE EYES JACKET

GREY SHOWN
\$339.99



JOE ROCKET HARD DRIVE JACKET

BLACK/GOLD SHOWN
\$309.99



JOE ROCKET METEOR 3.0 JACKET

BLK/ORG/WHT SHOWN
\$189.99



JOE ROCKET ATOMIC JACKET

BLK/RD/WHT SHOWN
\$129.99



JOE ROCKET MONTEREY JACKET

BLACK ONLY
\$259.99



JOE ROCKET BLASTER JACKET

BLK/RD/WHT SHOWN
\$289.99



JOE ROCKET ROCKET 88 JACKET

BLK/CHRY /CRME SHOWN
\$439.99



JOE ROCKET BLASTER PANT

\$239.99



JOE ROCKET BULLDOG PANT

\$339.99



JOE ROCKET SONIC JACKET

BLK/CHECKER SHOWN
\$289.99



JOE ROCKET SPEEDMASTER JACKET

YEL/BLK/CHRM SHOWN
\$439.99



JOE ROCKET SPEEDWAY JACKET

BLACK SHOWN
\$389.99



ELITE RAINSUIT

PANT- \$26.99
JACKET- \$44.99



ELITE NOMEX® RAINSUIT PANT

WITH HEAT SHIELD
PANELS
\$49.99



JOE ROCKET BALLISTIC 3.0 (MENS) PANT

\$139.99



JOE ROCKET JEAN (MENS & WOMENS) PANT

\$89.99



AGV CARBON 7 PRO GLOVE

WHT/RD/ BLK SHOWN

REG. 94.99 **SALE: \$79.97**



AGV PRISMA GLOVE

WHT/RD/BLK SHOWN

REG. 99.99 **SALE: \$69.97**



AGV IMOLA GLOVE

WHT/YEL/GUN SHOWN
\$44.99



02: AGV CORSA 2 GLOVE
BLK/PURP/YEL SHOWN

\$34.99



AGV RAGE GLOVE

WHT/BLU/BLK SHOWN

REG. 27.99 **SALE: \$24.97**



BUSE CARBONTEC GLOVE

BLACK/BLUE SHOWN
\$189.99



JOE ROCKET SPORT GLOVE

BLK/CREME SHOWN
\$48.99



JOE ROCKET HIGHSIDE GLOVE

YEL/BLK SHOWN
\$48.99

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OCELOT QR 24 LITER TANK BAG
REG. 84.99 **SALE \$57.97**



OCELOT QR 18 LITER TANK BAG
REG. 79.99 **SALE \$52.97**



OCELOT MAGNETIC 12 LITER TANKBAG
REG. 64.99 **SALE \$45.97**



OCELOT TAILBAG 17 LITER
REG. 59.99 **SALE \$39.97**



OCELOT QR 12 LITER TANK BAG
REG. 46.99 **SALE \$32.97**



TRICK KIT FENDER ELIMINATION KIT
FROM \$80.99



TANK SKINS
FROM \$53.99



SEAT SKINS
FROM \$44.99



NADY MA-100 MOTOR-CYCLE ALARM

\$41.99



NADY MA-200 MOTOR-CYCLE ALARM AND PAGER
\$142.99



CHATTERBOX HJC-2002 SECURITY SYSTEM
\$71.99



THUNDER PAGE MOTOR-CYCLE SECURITY ALARM SYSTEM
FROM \$254.99



XENA ALARM DISC LOCK
CLASSIC YELLOW OR CHROME
FROM \$49.99



BATTERY TENDER PLUS
TENDER PLUS- REG. 52.99 **SALE \$34.97**
TENDER JR- REG. 34.99 **SALE \$21.97**



ADJUSTABLE SWING ARM STAND SERIES II
REG. 70.99 **SALE \$66.97**



LP SPEED SCREEN
SMOKE OR CLEAR- REG. 37.99 **SALE \$34.97**
DRK. SMOKE OR COLORS- REG. 46.99 **SALE \$42.97**



DOWCO GUARDIAN COVERS

SIZE	REG.	SALE
45	52.99	\$36.97
50	54.99	\$40.97
100	64.99	\$47.97
125	71.99	\$50.97
150	77.99	\$58.97



ALUMINUM CHAIN GUARDS

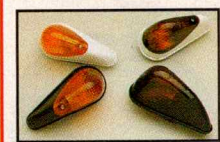
FROM \$35.99



UNIVERSAL CAFE FAIRING
REG. 40.99 **SALE \$36.97**



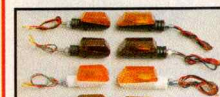
MARKER LIGHTS FLUSH MOUNT I
FROM \$12.99



MARKER LIGHT FLUSH MOUNT II WITH LENS
FROM \$16.99



MARKER LIGHT FLUSH MOUNT III WITH FULL LENS
\$12.99



MARKER LIGHTS SHORT STALK STYLE
SHORT STALK I **\$10.99**
SHORT STALK II **\$12.99**



LP LIGHT LIDS
CLEAR/SMOKE **\$17.99**
AMBER **\$27.99**



CBR MIRROR
\$26.99 EACH



ZX MIRROR
\$26.99 PAIR



CARBON LOOK F-1 MIRROR- PAIR
CARBON BLACK **\$53.99**
CARBON LOOK **\$26.99**
BLK OR WHT **\$20.99**



COWL MIRROR
\$24.99 EACH



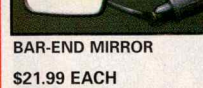
YZF MIRRORS
\$26.99 PAIR



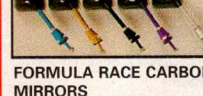
GSXR MIRROR
CONE STYLE-EA **\$12.99**
LATE STYLE-PR **\$26.99**



NINJA MIRROR
\$12.99 EACH



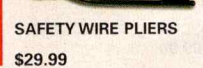
BAR-END MIRROR
\$21.99 EACH



FORMULA RACE CARBON MIRRORS
\$53.99 PAIR



SAFETY WIRE
\$12.99



SAFETY WIRE PLIERS
\$29.99



KRYPTONITE BARBED WIRE WITH EV DISC LOCK
REG. 71.70 **SALE \$39.97**



BIEFFE AIRTECH HELMET
SNELL 95 AND DOT APPROVED
Y2 RED/BLK/
PURP/SIL SHOWN
WHT OR BLK:
REG. 104.99 **SALE \$98.97**
MULTI:
REG. 109.99 **SALE \$104.97**



BIEFFE GPR HELMET
SNELL 95 AND DOT APPROVED
BIAGGI SHOWN
WHITE **\$260.99**
REPLICAS **\$309.99**



BIEFFE PREDATOR HELMET
SNELL 95 AND DOT APPROVED
REG. 219.99 **SALE \$202.97**



BIEFFE B8 HELMET
SNELL 95 AND DOT APPROVED
K1 WHT/BLUE/BLUE SHOWN
REPLICA:
REG. 124.99 **SALE \$115.97**
MULTI:
REG. 99.99 **SALE \$78.97**
WHITE:
REG. 89.99 **SALE \$71.97**



O'NEAL ST-899 HELMET
SNELL 95 AND DOT APPROVED
RD/BLK SHOWN
REG. 152.99 **SALE \$99.97**



MOTION PRO MERCURY CARBURETOR SYNCHRO TUNERS
\$64.99



OCELOT DELUXE HELMET BAG
BLACK **\$15.99**



THHT-793 HELMET
SNELL APPROVED
BLACK/RED SHOWN
MULTI **\$106.99**
SOLID **\$89.99**



THHT-888 CLASSIC HELMET
DOT APPROVED
\$64.99



THHT-380 HELMET
DOT APPROVED
\$39.99



SHOEI SYNCROTEC HELMET
DOT APPROVED
BLACK SHOWN
WHT OR BLK **\$388.99**
COLORS **\$399.99**



SHOEI TZ-1 GRAPHICS
SNELL 2000 AND DOT APPROVED
TC-5 BLU/WHT/RED SHOWN
GRAPHICS **\$352.99**
METALLICS **\$275.99**
SOLIDS **\$260.99**

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2. Call Salesman and Confirm 5. Acct# - Salesman Name
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DUNLOP D402 FRONT	
SALE	
MT90H16	79.97
MT90H16 SW	104.97
MT90H16 WWW	100.97
MT90H21 TT	97.97
REAR	
SALE	
MT90H16	93.97
MT90H16 SW	106.97
MT90H16 WWW	111.97
SW = SUM WHITE WALL	
WWW = DUNE WHITE WALL	
TT = TUBE TYPE	



DUNLOP K491 ELITE II FRONT	
SALE	
MT90H16 TL	77.97
MT90H16 TL RWL	88.97
100/90H18 TL	68.97
MR90H18 TL RWL	85.97
130/70H18 TL	93.97
MM90H18 TL	64.97
MM90H19 TL RWL	67.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 TL	91.97
140/90H15 TL RWL	111.97
MT90H16 TL	86.97
MT90H16 TL RWL	97.97
100/90H18 TL	91.97
160/80H16 TL RWL	100.97
160/80H16 TL	117.97
MT90H17 TL	88.97
MT90H17 TL RWL	97.97
110/90H18 TL	77.97
120/90H18 TL	77.97



DUNLOP GT501 FRONT	
SALE	
90/90 19 D606	55.97
100/90V16	65.97
120/80V16	77.97
110/80V17	79.97
110/80V18	73.97
100/80V19	76.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90V16	88.97
140/90V16	97.97
150/80V16*	105.97
140/80V17	107.97
150/70V17	110.97
120/90V18	84.97
130/80V18	88.97
*BELTED	



DUNLOP D207 GP-RACE FRONT	
SALE	
120/70Z17	139.97
REAR	
SALE	
170/60Z17	176.97
180/55Z17	174.97



DUNLOP D207 ZR FRONT	
SALE	
120/60Z17	84.97
120/70Z17	83.97
130/70Z17	82.97
REAR	
SALE	
160/60Z17	101.97
170/60Z17	104.97
180/55Z17	109.97
190/50Z17	144.97



DUNLOP CRUISEMAX FRONT	
SALE	
130/90H16 RWL	89.97
130/90H16 BLK	83.97
130/90H16 WWW	81.97
120/90H18 RWL	83.97
100/90H19 RWL	62.97
110/90H19 RWL	73.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 RWL	83.97
140/90H15 BLK	77.97
150/90H15 RWL	85.97
170/80H15 RWL	96.97
140/90H16 RWL	83.97
140/90H16 BLK	85.97
140/90H16 WWW	102.97
150/80H16 RWL	100.97
150/80H16 WWW	100.97



DUNLOP CRUISEMAX FRONT	
SALE	
130/90H16 RWL	89.97
130/90H16 BLK	83.97
130/90H16 WWW	81.97
120/90H18 RWL	83.97
100/90H19 RWL	62.97
110/90H19 RWL	73.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 RWL	83.97
140/90H15 BLK	77.97
150/90H15 RWL	85.97
170/80H15 RWL	96.97
140/90H16 RWL	83.97
140/90H16 BLK	85.97
140/90H16 WWW	102.97
150/80H16 RWL	100.97
150/80H16 WWW	100.97

*V-RATED FOR YAMAHA V-MAX



DUNLOP D207 ZR FRONT	
SALE	
120/60Z17	84.97
120/70Z17	83.97
130/70Z17	82.97
REAR	
SALE	
160/60Z17	101.97
170/60Z17	104.97
180/55Z17	109.97
190/50Z17	144.97



DUNLOP CRUISEMAX FRONT	
SALE	
130/90H16 RWL	89.97
130/90H16 BLK	83.97
130/90H16 WWW	81.97
120/90H18 RWL	83.97
100/90H19 RWL	62.97
110/90H19 RWL	73.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 RWL	83.97
140/90H15 BLK	77.97
150/90H15 RWL	85.97
170/80H15 RWL	96.97
140/90H16 RWL	83.97
140/90H16 BLK	85.97
140/90H16 WWW	102.97
150/80H16 RWL	100.97
150/80H16 WWW	100.97



DUNLOP GT501 FRONT	
SALE	
90/90 19 D606	55.97
100/90V16	65.97
120/80V16	77.97
110/80V17	79.97
110/80V18	73.97
100/80V19	76.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90V16	88.97
140/90V16	97.97
150/80V16*	105.97
140/80V17	107.97
150/70V17	110.97
120/90V18	84.97
130/80V18	88.97
*BELTED	



DUNLOP D207 GP-RACE FRONT	
SALE	
120/70Z17	139.97
REAR	
SALE	
170/60Z17	176.97
180/55Z17	174.97



DUNLOP D207 ZR FRONT	
SALE	
120/60Z17	84.97
120/70Z17	83.97
130/70Z17	82.97
REAR	
SALE	
160/60Z17	101.97
170/60Z17	104.97
180/55Z17	109.97
190/50Z17	144.97



DUNLOP CRUISEMAX FRONT	
SALE	
130/90H16 RWL	89.97
130/90H16 BLK	83.97
130/90H16 WWW	81.97
120/90H18 RWL	83.97
100/90H19 RWL	62.97
110/90H19 RWL	73.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 RWL	83.97
140/90H15 BLK	77.97
150/90H15 RWL	85.97
170/80H15 RWL	96.97
140/90H16 RWL	83.97
140/90H16 BLK	85.97
140/90H16 WWW	102.97
150/80H16 RWL	100.97
150/80H16 WWW	100.97



DUNLOP CRUISEMAX FRONT	
SALE	
130/90H16 RWL	89.97
130/90H16 BLK	83.97
130/90H16 WWW	81.97
120/90H18 RWL	83.97
100/90H19 RWL	62.97
110/90H19 RWL	73.97
REAR	
SALE	
140/90H15 RWL	83.97
140/90H15 BLK	77.97
150/90H15 RWL	85.97
170/80H15 RWL	96.97
140/90H16 RWL	83.97
140/90H16 BLK	85.97
140/90H16 WWW	102.97
150/80H16 RWL	100.97
150/80H16 WWW	100.97

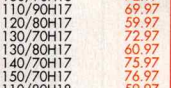
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AVON AZARO FRONT AV35	
SALE	
110/70Z17	111.97
110/80Z17	111.97
120/60Z17	114.97
110/80Z18	114.97
120/70Z18	116.97
REAR AV36	
SALE	
160/80Z16	133.97
140/80Z17	127.97
150/70Z17	133.97
160/60Z17	139.97
(4.5" RIM)	
160/60Z17	139.97
(5.0" RIM)	
160/70Z17	155.97
(5.0" RIM)	
170/60Z17	143.97
(5.5" RIM)	
180/55Z17	151.97
190/50Z17	163.97
160/60Z18	135.97



BRIDGESTONE BT45 HIGH PERFORMANCE TIRE	
SALE	
110/90V16	60.97
120/80V16	64.97
110/80V17	76.97
100/90V18	62.97
110/80V18	64.97
110/90V18	64.97
100/90V19	64.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90V16	74.97
150/80V16	86.97
120/90V17	71.97
130/90V17	74.97



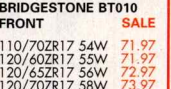
BRIDGESTONE BT45 SPORT TOURING FRONT	
SALE	
100/90H16	55.97
100/80H17	65.97
110/70H17	66.97
110/80H17	66.97
120/70H17	68.97
90/90H18	57.97
100/80H18	60.97
100/90H18	59.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90H16	72.97
110/90H17	69.97
120/80H17	59.97
130/70H17	72.97
130/80H17	60.97
140/70H17	75.97
150/70H17	76.97
110/80H18	59.97
110/90H18	59.97
120/80H18	61.97
130/70H18	75.97
140/70H18	76.97
150/70H18	78.97



BRIDGESTONE BT45 SPORT TOURING FRONT	
SALE	
100/90H16	55.97
100/80H17	65.97
110/70H17	66.97
110/80H17	66.97
120/70H17	68.97
90/90H18	57.97
100/80H18	60.97
100/90H18	59.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90H16	72.97
110/90H17	69.97
120/80H17	59.97
130/70H17	72.97
130/80H17	60.97
140/70H17	75.97
150/70H17	76.97
110/80H18	59.97
110/90H18	59.97
120/80H18	61.97
130/70H18	75.97
140/70H18	76.97
150/70H18	78.97



BRIDGESTONE BT45 SPORT TOURING FRONT	
SALE	
100/90H16	55.97
100/80H17	65.97
110/70H17	66.97
110/80H17	66.97
120/70H17	68.97
90/90H18	57.97
100/80H18	60.97
100/90H18	59.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90H16	72.97
110/90H17	69.97
120/80H17	59.97
130/70H17	72.97
130/80H17	60.97
140/70H17	75.97
150/70H17	76.97
110/80H18	59.97
110/90H18	59.97
120/80H18	61.97
130/70H18	75.97
140/70H18	76.97
150/70H18	78.97



BRIDGESTONE BT45 SPORT TOURING FRONT	
SALE	
100/90H16	55.97
100/80H17	65.97
110/70H17	66.97
110/80H17	66.97
120/70H17	68.97
90/90H18	57.97
100/80H18	60.97
100/90H18	59.97
REAR	
SALE	
130/90H16	72.97
110/90H17	69.97
120/80H17	59.97
130/70H17	72.97
130/80H17	60.97
140/70H17	75.97
150/70H17	76.97
110/80H18	59.97
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130/70H18	75.97
140/70H18	76.97
150/70H18	78.97

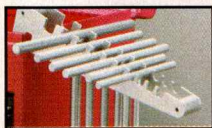


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TOOL RACK

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T-HANDLE WRENCHES

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LP GLASMASK TANK TOP

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HALF- \$31.99
EMBROIDERED- \$35.99
CARBON LOOK- \$44.99



TOUR MASTER CORTECH
SADDLEBAG

BLACK
\$139.99



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TAILBAG

BLACK
\$76.99



TOUR MASTER NYLON
SLANT SADDLEBAGS

LARGE-\$71.99
XLARGE-\$80.99



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ADVANCERS

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EBC STREET RACER
CLUTCH KIT

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PLEXIFAIRING™ 3



NATIONAL CYCLE
PLEXIFAIRING™ 3

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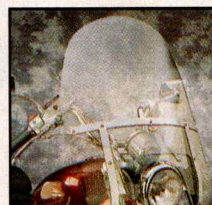
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PLEXISTAR 2

FROM \$97.99



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MUFFLER

F1- \$149.99
F1R- \$204.99



NATIONAL CYCLE
TOURING HEAVY DUTY™
WINDSHIELD

\$142.99



NATIONAL CYCLE
RANGER HEAVY DUTY™
WINDSHIELD

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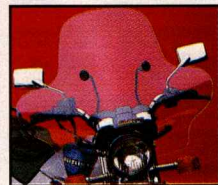
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SHIELD

FROM \$73.99



NATIONAL CYCLE
DEFLECTOR SCREEN

FROM \$50.99



SLIP STREAMER III® S-03
'THE ORIGINAL'

FROM \$99.99



SLIP STREAMER SPORT
FAIRING SS-28

FROM \$96.99



SLIP STREAMER HELLFIRE
SS-24

FROM \$73.99



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HIDEAWAY TAIL TRUNK

\$39.99



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TANKBAG

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CHASE HARPER AEROPAC
TAIL TRUNK

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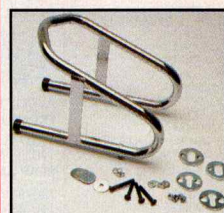
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TOURING JACKET &
PANTS

JACKET- BLACK
\$116.99
PANTS- BLACK
\$107.99



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YELLOW H4 12V 60/65W
\$11.99
GOLD H4 12V 60/55W
\$18.99
BLUE H4 12V 60/55W
\$16.99
ULTRA WHT H4 12V
60/55W
\$15.99
ALL WEATHER H4
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AGV STORM SUIT
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REG. 599.99 **SALE: \$469.97**
2-PIECE SUIT
REG. 599.99 **SALE: \$469.97**

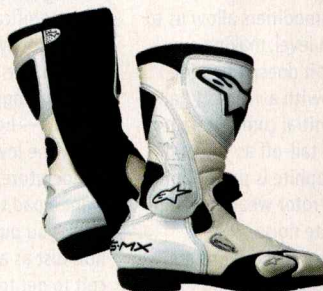


AGV WOLF 1-PIECE SUIT
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REG. 449.99 **SALE: \$429.97**

alpinestars



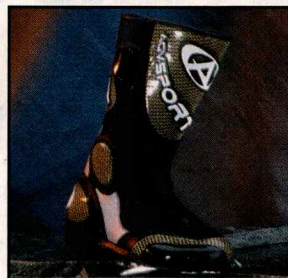
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4. Reference # - Name of Customer
5. Acct# - Salesman Name

the real world

Edited By Marc Cook

96 DOIN' TIME Long-term bikes **98 THE LIST** Specs on 182 year-2001 models **99 HOW-TO** Steely gaze **101 ANSWERS** Learn to lean
103 STREET SAVVY Following distance **104 TECHNIQUE** Evasive action **105 HARD NUMBERS** Recorded data on MC test bikes

Eight Things You Didn't Know About: Brake Pads

DP Brakes' Tony Mills on friction and feel

INDUSTRY INSIDER

Brakes are as important as tires. Well, sure they are, but the analogy goes a level deeper. I have spent the last 40 years of my professional life dealing with tires for Dunlop, so it's really clear to me how tires and brake pads accomplish similar objectives. Tires create friction against the road, and brake pads create friction against stainless-steel or cast-iron discs. That much you probably know, but understand that choosing replacement brake pads takes as much consideration as finding the right replacement tire. Do you ride hard or tour? Are you an all-season commuter or a fair-weather weekender? A race-style pad is not the right part for a tourer or commuter, while a higher-friction pad will improve the overall performance of a sportbike. Also, be sure you replace your worn-out pads with parts of equal or better quality. These days, original-equipment pads, which are almost always sintered, are extremely good.

Brake-pad compounds aren't as simple as they sound. When disc brakes were introduced, all the original-equipment and aftermarket pads were called "organic," made of asbestos fibers embedded in a binder that held them together and provided some means to stick them to the backing plate. But as the health impact of asbestos was discovered, pad manufacturers started looking at other materials. Unfortunately, asbestos had excellent properties: quite heat resistant and very efficient. A number of technologies were developed, including semimetallic, Kevlar-reinforced, carbon-metallic and

sintered-metallic to provide similar or improved qualities as asbestos.

Over time, all of the original-equipment manufacturers settled on sintered pads because, I think, this technology offers the best balance of feedback, braking power and all-weather performance.

Sintered-metallic and semimetallic pads are very different animals. A conventional semimetallic pad has different-sized crushed metal chips of varying components—usually softer alloys—embedded in an organic binder and bonded to the backing pad. When you pick up one of these pads, you can actually see the metal particles, which are present to provide the desired friction and heat-carrying capacity of the pad.

Sintered-metal pads are made entirely differently [all DP Brakes pads are sintered]. A DP pad is a complex mix of metallic powders combined with refractory material; the metal is to absorb heat and the refractory elements are there to provide the friction. Added to this mix are friction modifiers and graphite. The modifiers allow us to finely tune the pad's friction level, making sure, for example, that it doesn't provide poor initial feel with a vicious final bite, or good initial come-in with a disconcerting tail-off as you pull harder. The graphite is present to minimize rotor wear and help eliminate noise.

These constituents are mixed together and pressed in a sintering process to the final shape and thickness. (Sintering is merely the bonding and partial fusing of

metal components under heat and pressure, done just below the melting point of the metals.) During this process the slug of sintered material is bonded to a backing plate.

The sintering process for brake pads, pioneered by Dunlop's aviation division for aircraft brakes in the 1970s, offers significant advantages in that the metal alloys are much better dispersed, and provide consistent performance as the pad wears.

Some pads are better than others in the wet.

Sintered pads are, in my opinion, superior to semimetallics or organics in wet-weather braking. This is because they're considerably more porous, and therefore don't allow water to collect on the surface of the pad.

Soft and hard are misnomers in describing brake pads.

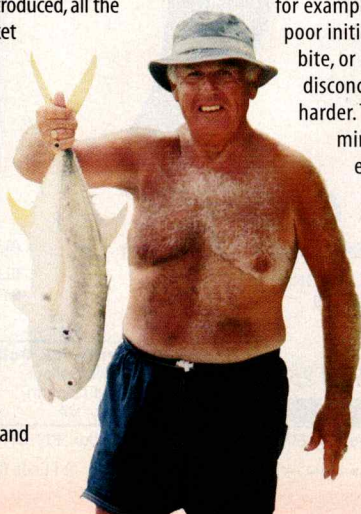
In fact, the actual hardness of the pad is largely irrelevant to its coefficient of friction. Instead, we use a letter-grading system. You may see a GG or an HH designation on performance pads. The letters represent the torque produced by the pad rubbing at a defined load against a cast-iron drum. The torque is measured cold and hot, hence the two letters in the designation.

You really wouldn't want the highest friction available.

It would be easy to make a pad with significantly more friction than an HH available in today's world, but you really wouldn't want to ride with it. Here's why: Brake pads are carefully engineered to balance instantaneous braking—how the pads react when you first apply the lever on cold brakes—to high-temperature, high-speed response. You don't want a pad to get suddenly more or less powerful as you pull in the lever or as the brakes get hot. Just as a pad with low friction can be difficult to get to maximum potential, a high-friction pad may be too tough to modulate on hard stops or could come in so suddenly that locking a tire becomes a real possibility.

The engineers at DP have provided a pad that's just above the normal HH specification. These are called HH+ and they not only provide higher friction, but also still provide easy modulation of braking effort.

Tony Mills is always fishing for a better brake pad.



Smart Money

HONDA VALKYRIE, 1997-2000

Squealing brake pads aren't complaining, they're just vibrating. When the pads squeal, it's because they've hit a harmonic in the braking system, resonating with imperfections on the disc. Using the correct balance of graphite in a sintered pad, the correct OEM antisqueal plate or a high-temperature grease on the edges and back of the backing plate will help prevent squealing.

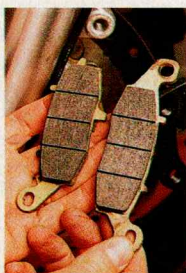
Insulation is important. All brakes create heat in dissipating kinetic energy. Heat is hard on the calipers and brake fluid, so DP applies a layer of ceramic material to the back side of the pad. Sitting between the backing plate and the caliper pistons, this layer, only 0.01-inch thick, has the insulation properties of 0.04-inch-thick asbestos.

—Tony Mills

Make or Brake

Breaking-in brake pads the right way

You can spend your money on high-friction brake pads only to have their grippy little lives shortened or rendered moot by a few common mistakes.



MARC COOK

Make sure the brake calipers and discs are spotlessly clean: no grease, no leftover road mung. Brake fluid spilled from the last bleeding or antisqueal grease can ruin the pads and discs. Spray the disc surfaces with a brake or contact cleaner before the first ride. (And wipe up your mess!)

Take care to bed the pads in properly. In much the same way piston rings and cylinder walls need to get acquainted on a new or rebuilt engine, the pads and rotors need to be mated. Extreme braking with new pads concentrates the generated heat in small patches, unevenly over the area of the pad, and can cause localized overheating and work-hardening of the pad material. This overheated pad will never live up to its full friction potential.

So, don't flog the pad early-on, but don't baby it either. Generally, treat new pads a bit like new tires. Work them gently at first, but work up to moderate braking levels and keep in mind that it could take 100-200 miles to fully bed-in a set of pads.

When in doubt, read the directions. Specific pads may have unusual break-in procedures, but the box they came in will tell you all you need to know.

- **Cheer:** More torque than a John Deere tractor
- **Jeer:** Handful to ride at parking-lot speeds
- **Verdict:** The biggest, baddest power cruiser on the market

Honda capitalized on the heritage of its popular Gold Wing and built the outsized Valkyrie cruiser on the Wing's 1500cc flat-six. These big, fast bikes can be intimidating at walking speeds, but once on the move they become graceful beasts. Like the Wing, Valkyries are ultrareliable, but watch out for thrashed examples (as always) and inexpertly modified bikes. Prices range from \$8500 for a standard 1997 model to \$13,800 for a 2000 Valkyrie Interstate.



KEVIN WING

KAWASAKI NINJA ZX-11, 1990-2000

- **Cheer:** Big, stable, fast and reliable
- **Jeer:** Big and heavy!
- **Verdict:** High-speed hot rod that does many things well

Kawasaki's ZX-11 was the top-speed king for nearly seven years, with a maximum-velocity near 180 mph. Mildly updated in 1993, the ZX-11 is still among the fastest street-bikes and is extremely reliable, provided it receives proper maintenance. The engine won't tolerate long oil-change intervals, and watch for cranky second-gear synchros. The suspension, only adequate when new, will likely need help; budget for a new shock and fork updates before you contemplate adding to the power output. Fortunately, the ZX-11 was often bought by (ahem) mature riders, so thrash cases are comparatively rare. A 1990 model sells for approximately \$3700, while a 2000 model will cost \$8650.



KEVIN WING

SUZUKI GS500E, 1989-2000

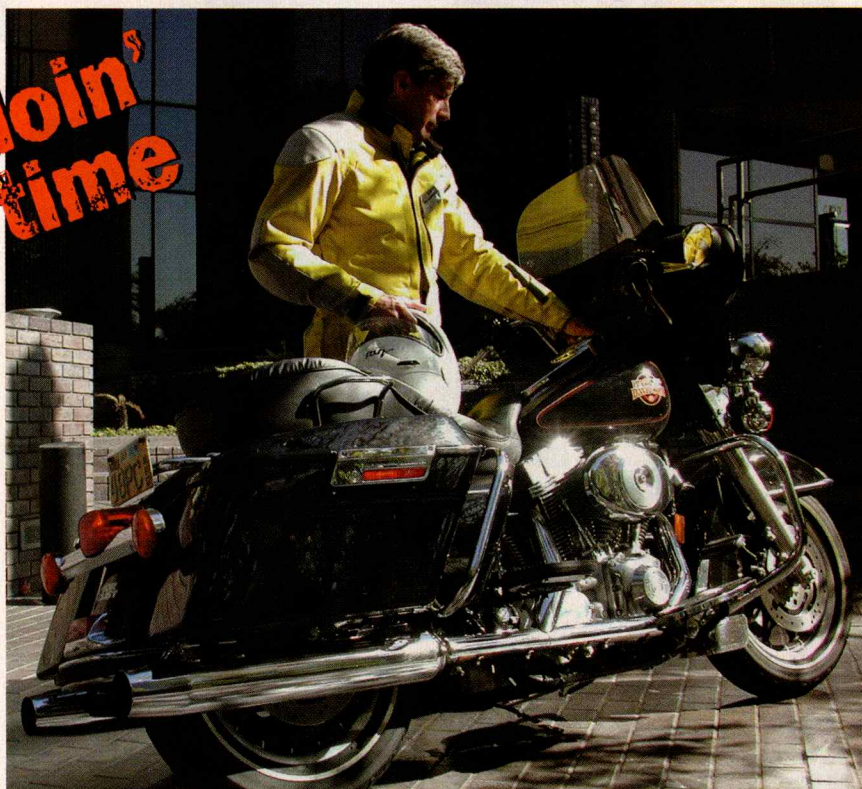
- **Cheer:** Simple, cheap and fun (if you're into this sort of thing)
- **Jeer:** Modest power output might turn off experienced riders
- **Verdict:** An inexpensive, sporty beginner's bike

The roots of the GS500E go all the way back to Suzuki's original four-stroke twin, the GS400 of 1977, but that doesn't necessarily make it obsolete as a first-timer's bike. As you'd expect from a newbie's ride, used examples often haven't received the best maintenance. But other than tachometers that fail on a regular basis, these bikes are reliable. Watch for used race bikes, though, since the air-cooled engine will wear out when run hard. A 1989 example will run you approximately \$1200, and a 2000 version costs \$3725.



Thanks to Lewis and Barb Lakey of Roy's Repair in Minneapolis, MN, for the technical advice. Used prices are from the AMA Official Motorcycle Value Guide, and reflect full retail value for original or reconditioned, well-maintained motorcycles.

**doin'
time**



MARC COOK

H-D Electra Glide Standard

A modern classic that works!

LONG-TERM

- **Ringleader:** Kevin Smith
- **MSRP:** \$13,130 (2000 model)
- **Miles:** 7400-8300
- **Average Fuel Mileage:** 43 mpg
- **Modifications:** windshield, sound system, gauges, mirrors

Our mad rate of mile-building trailed off a little this month, as the McQuide Glide didn't pound off to any faraway gatherings. But it is a fine daily commuter too, and has remained troublefree in that duty. Trying to pick some nits (so you won't think we're slackers), all we can point to is a touch of oil misting here and there, and an occasional, one-stumble mis-



It got gauge! Factory catalog provided easy-fit radio/speaker kit and instruments to upgrade the Standard Glide to Classic spec.

fire on very light throttle and moderate revs.

We can note a few, uh, eccentricities—just details we aren't growing to love. Take the turn-signal switches. Please. One on each side, push-to-toggle on and off, with a self-canceling feature that tries to help, but too often fools you. As a result, you have to divert some focus away from the road to the indicator lamps instead of going by feel, as you can a conventional push-to-cancel switch. And fill-ups are a bit awkward, between the chrome filler cover (rear-hinged, and doesn't open beyond straight up) and an unleaded-nozzles-only restrictor plate blocking your view. We also found the standard windshield a little high (with the upper edge often directly where we wanted to see), but that was improved by a lower screen (\$105) out of the Harley wish book.

We made a few other factory-source upgrades, including the Premium Sound System (AM/FM/cassette and two speakers, for \$721), oil pressure and ambient-air-temp gauges (\$100), and a tidy pair of rearview mirrors (\$60) that tuck in on the fairing wings just ahead of your hands.

One trait of note is this FLHT's sensitivity to tire pressure. The spec is 36 psi front and rear (40 in back with a passenger), and handling goes a little limp if you let it slip at all below that. In fact, we find the bike pleasantly lively and responsive with a couple extra psi, more like 38/38 (solo). The only other characteristic we need to recognize about this modern, rubber-engine-mount Electra Glide is how its surprising running smoothness (and seat comfort, wind protection and control feel) makes a believer out of everyone who hops aboard. —K.S.

BUELL S3T

- **Ringleader:** Holmstrom
- **Miles:** 7400-9900



BRIAN J. NELSON

The Buell spent half of the last month in the shop, getting new fork seals, front and rear brake discs, and a new shock. Buell's techs mounted a new pipe when they replaced the shock, moving the power up the rev range a bit and making the bike less wheelie-happy in the process—which should be good news for the fork seals. A new Corbin saddle has improved long-range touring prospects immensely. —D.H.

BMW R1150GS

- **Ringleader:** Cook
- **Miles:** 4000-4800



MARC COOK

Penske sent two gorgeous 8960-series shocks and most of the month has been spent swapping springs (easy on the front; a bear on the back) and twiddling the three damping adjustments on each. R&D is tedious but we'll have a fine-riding GS when we're done. At 4123 miles, the stub lever was found loose on the shift shaft. Horrors! —M.C.

TRIUMPH TT600

- **Ringleader:** Boehm
- **Miles:** 3700-4100



KEVIN WING

Marc Cook has put nearly all the miles on the TT600 recently, and even then it's been mostly track time. "It's really a good track bike," he says. "The low-end fuel-injection glitch isn't so noticeable and you can really appreciate the excellent chassis and brakes." The Bridgestone BT-010s, after two track days, are starting to look a bit ragged. —M.B.

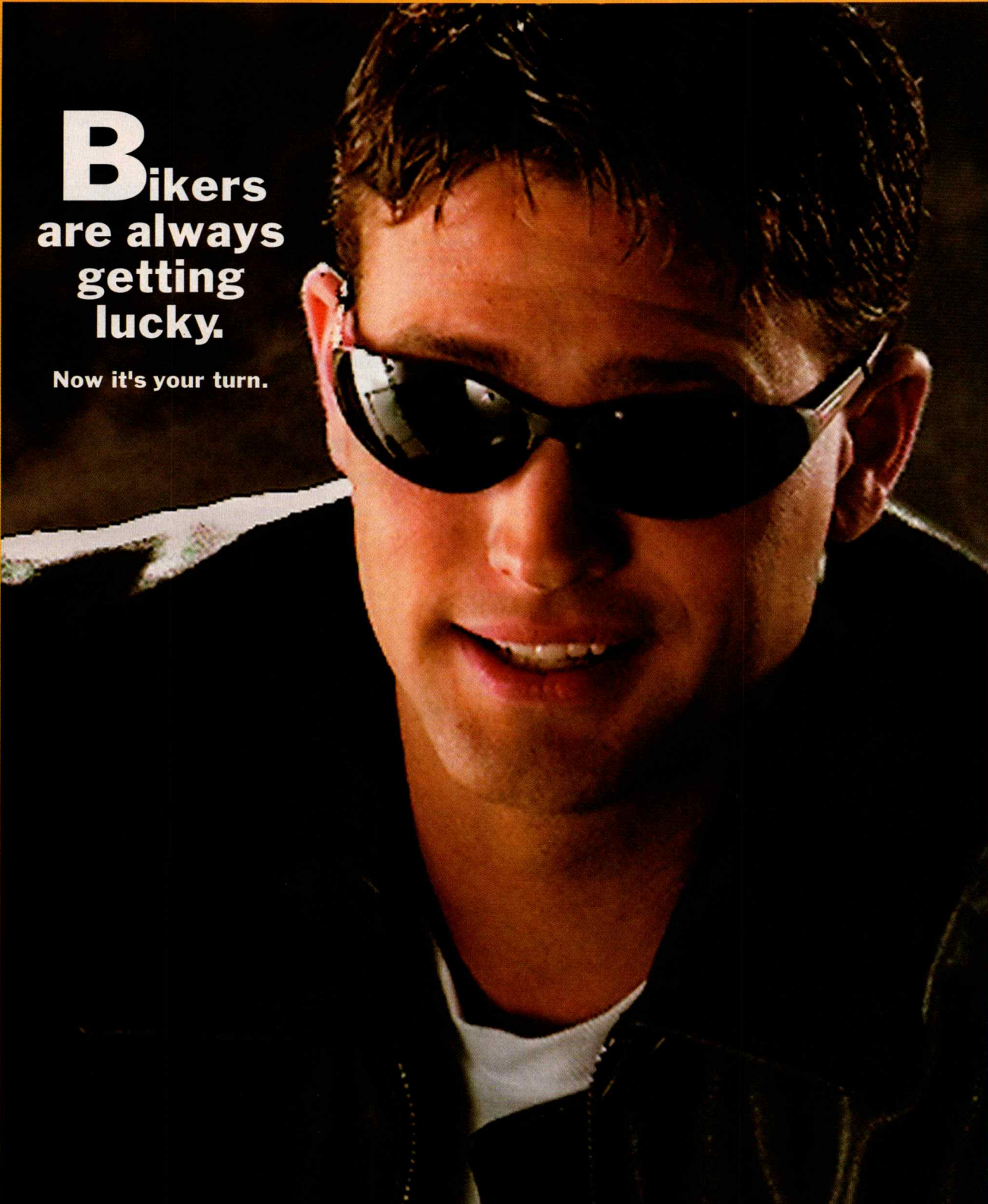
HONDA CBR929RR

- **Ringleader:** Carithers
- **Miles:** 4200-5000



KEVIN WING

Everybody's favorite beast has been spinning along happily with a sump full of fresh oil. OK, so my Columbus, Ohio to Los Angeles epic on Honda's 2001 Gold Wing confined our magic 929 to the garage. It's still teetering on the brink of 5000 miles (just eight short) and pining for something new and sticky to replace these tattered Michelin Pilots. —T.C.



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are always
getting
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CONVENTIONS

note 1:
cooling medium
(a/c=air/liquid-cooled, a-o/c=air and oil-cooled); total number of valves (4v), displacement in cc; number of cylinders and configuration (single, inline-three, opposed-twin, V-twin)

BACK ISSUES

To order back issues call (800) 544-6748, fax (201) 635-0145 or e-mail ISI@wwmag.com.

model	price	class	engine (note 1)	speeds/ final drive	dry weight (lb.)	seat height (in.)	wheel- base (in.)	rake (deg)/ trail (mm)	fuel cap. (gal.)
APRILIA 110 LONDONDERRY COURT SUITE 130 WOODSTOCK, GA 30188; 770/592-2261 WWW.APRILIA.COM									
RSV Mille R/SP	\$17,299	sport	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	407	32.5	56.2	23.5-25.5/87-107	5.0
RSV Mille	\$13,899	sport	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	416	32.5	55.2	24.5/95	5.0
SL1000 Falco	\$11,299	sport	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	418	32.1	55.2	24.5/100	5.3
RS250 Challenge	\$8569	sport	l/c 2st 249 V-twin	6/chain	295	33.0	53.7	25.5/102	5.0
RS50	\$3549	sport	l/c 2st 50 V-twin	6/chain	196	31.9	50.4	24.0/102	3.4
RST1000 Futura	\$12,999	sport-touring	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	463	32.3	56.5	26.9/102	5.5
ETV1000 CapoNord	\$11,999	dual-sport	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	474	32.3	61.4	27.9/129	6.6
Pegaso 650 i.e.	\$7877	dual-sport	l/c 5v 652 single	5/chain	386	31.9	58.1	28.7/115	NA
BMW 300 CHESTNUT RIDGE ROAD WOODCLIFF LAKE, NJ 07675; 201/307-4000 WWW.BMWUSA.COM									
K1200LT	\$16,990	touring	l/c 16v 1171 inline-four	5/shaft	834	30.3	64.3	26.8/NA	6.1
K1200RS	\$16,700	sport-touring	l/c 16v 1171 inline-four	6/shaft	628	30.3	61.0	22.3/124	5.5
R1100RT	\$15,990	sport-touring	a-o/c 8v 1085 opposed-twin	5/shaft	563	30.7	58.5	27.2/122	6.6
R1200C Euro/Phoenix	\$15,100	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1170 opposed-twin	5/shaft	686	29.1	64.9	29.5/134	4.5
R1200C	\$14,500	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1170 opposed-twin	5/shaft	686	29.1	64.9	29.5/134	4.5
R1150GS	\$14,500	dual-sport	a-o/c 8v 1130 opposed-twin	6/shaft	530	33.1	59.4	27.1/114.3	5.5
F650GS	\$8100	dual-sport	l/c 4v single	5/chain	425	30.7	58.5	28.1/113	4.4
R1100S	\$13,990	sport	a-o/c 8v 1085 opposed-twin	6/shaft	504	29.9	58.2	25.0/100	4.8
R1150R	NA	standard	a-o/c 8v 1170 opposed-twin	6/shaft	525	31.5	58.5	27.0/127	5.4
BUELL 3700 WEST JUNEAU AVENUE MILWAUKEE, WI 53208; 414/343-8400 WWW.BUELL.COM									
Thunderbolt S3/S3T	\$12,795	sport-touring	a/c 4v 1203 V-twin	5/belt	450	29.5	55.0	24.5/97	5.4
Lightning X1	\$10,695	sport	a/c 4v 1203 V-twin	5/belt	440	29.5	55.0	23.0/89	4.6
Cyclone M2/Low	\$8795	sport	a/c 4v 1203 V-twin	5/belt	435	29.5	55.0	24.5/97	5.0
Blast!	\$4395	standard	a/c 2v 492 single	5/belt	360	27.5	55.3	25.0/86	2.8
CAGIVA 1901 DAVISVILLE ROAD WILLOW GROVE, PA 19090; 215/830-3300 WWW.CAGIVAUSA.COM									
Gran Canyon	\$8995	dual-sport	a/c 4v 904 V-twin	6/chain	458	33.2	59.8	27.5/91	5.3
DUCATI 237 WEST PARKWAY POMPTON PLAINS, NJ 07444; 973/839-2600 WWW.DUCATIUSA.COM									
996R	NA	sport	l/c 8v 998 V-twin	6/chain	407	31.1	55.5	23.5-24.5/91-97	4.4
996S	\$21,495	sport	l/c 8v 996 V-twin	6/chain	436	31.1	55.5	23.5-24.5/91-97	4.4
996	\$16,795	sport	l/c 8v 996 V-twin	6/chain	436	31.1	55.5	23.5-24.5/91-97	4.4
748/748S	\$12,495	sport	l/c 8v 748 V-twin	6/chain	423	31.1	55.5	23.5-24.5/91-97	4.4
Supersport 900	\$10,595	sport	a/c 4v 904 V-twin	6/chain	415	32.1	54.9	24.0/100	4.2
Supersport 750	\$8745	sport	a/c 4v 748 V-twin	5/chain	404	32.1	55.3	24.0/96	4.2
750 Sport	\$7695	sport	a/c 4v 748 V-twin	5/chain	400	32.1	55.3	24.0/96	4.2
ST4	\$13,295	sport-touring	l/c 8v 916 V-twin	6/chain	474	32.3	56.3	24.0/102	5.5
ST2	\$11,795	sport-touring	l/c 4v 944 V-twin	6/chain	460	32.3	56.3	24.0/102	5.5
Monster S4	\$12,495	standard	l/c 8v 916 V-twin	6/chain	423	31.6	56.7	24.0/102	4.2
Monster 900	\$9995	standard	a/c 4v 904 V-twin	6/chain	407	30.3	56.3	23.0/104	4.2
Monster 750	\$7495	standard	a/c 4v 748 V-twin	5/chain	392	30.3	56.3	23.0/94	4.2
Monster 600	\$5995	standard	a/c 4v 583 V-twin	5/chain	392	30.3	56.3	23.0/94	4.2
HARLEY-DAVIDSON 3700 WEST JUNEAU AVENUE MILWAUKEE, WI 53208; 414/343-4680 WWW.HARLEY-DAVIDSON.COM									
Electra Glide Classic	\$15,940	touring	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	776	27.3	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Electra Glide Standard	\$13,595	touring	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	758	27.3	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Electra Glide Ultra	\$18,980	touring	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	788	27.3	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Road Glide	\$15,780	touring	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	731	26.9	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Road King	\$16,695	touring	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	723	27.3	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Heritage Softail	\$16,235	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	696	25.4	64.5	32.0/147	5.0
Heritage Springer	\$17,545	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	716	27.3	63.5	26.0/156	5.0
Softail Deuce	\$16,235	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	645	26.0	66.6	34.0/127	4.9
Springer Softail	\$15,690	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	653	25.8	65.4	32.0/135	5.0
Dyna Wide Glide	\$15,695	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	612	26.8	66.1	32.0/130	5.2
Fat Boy	\$15,495	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	666	25.5	64.5	32.0/147	5.0
DynaT-Sport	\$14,720	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	642	27.9	63.2	28.0/104	4.9
Night Train	\$14,635	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	630	25.2	66.9	34.0/127	5.0
Dyna Low Rider	\$14,595	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	614	26.5	65.5	32.0/130	4.9
Dyna Sport	\$13,720	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	619	27.2	63.2	28.0/104	4.9
Softail Standard	\$12,535	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	630	26.1	66.9	34.0/127	5.0
Dyna Super Glide	\$11,470	cruiser	a/c 4v 1450 V-twin	5/belt	612	26.5	62.5	28.0/104	4.9
Sportster 1200C	\$8995	cruiser	a/c 4v 1200 V-twin	5/belt	491	27.5	60.0	30.1/119	3.3
Sportster 1200S	\$8595	cruiser	a/c 4v 1200 V-twin	5/belt	501	28.0	60.2	29.6/117	3.3
Sportster 1200	\$7895	cruiser	a/c 4v 1200 V-twin	5/belt	491	28.9	60.0	29.6/117	3.3
Sportster 883	\$5595	cruiser	a/c 4v 883 V-twin	5/belt	489	28.0	60.0	30.1/119	3.3
HONDA 1919 TORRANCE BOULEVARD TORRANCE, CA 90501; 310/783-2000 WWW.HONDAMOTORCYCLE.COM									
Gold Wing 1800	\$17,499	touring	l/c 12v 1832 opposed-six	5/shaft	792	29.1	66.6	29.2/109	6.6
Valkyrie Interstate	\$15,499	touring	l/c 12v 1520 opposed-six	5/shaft	771	28.7	66.5	32.0/152	6.9
A.C.E. Tourer	\$9299	touring	l/c 6v 1099 V-twin	5/shaft	626	28.7	65.2	NA/NA	4.2
Valkyrie	\$13,099	cruiser	l/c 12v 1520 opposed-six	5/shaft	682	28.9	66.5	32.2/152	5.3
Shadow Aero	\$8999	cruiser	l/c 6v 1099 V-twin	5/shaft	615	28.5	66.1	32.4/161	4.2
Shadow Sabre	\$8199	cruiser	l/c 6v 1099 V-twin	5/shaft	573	27.2	64.6	32.4/161	4.2
Shadow Spirit	\$7999	cruiser	l/c 6v 1099 V-twin	5/shaft	544	28.7	65.0	32.4/161	4.2
Shadow Spirit 750	\$5999	cruiser	l/c 6v 745 V-twin	5/chain	496	26.6	64.8	33.0/157	3.7
VF750C Magna	\$7499	cruiser	l/c 16v 748 V-four	5/chain	505	28.0	65.0	32.0/137	3.6
Shadow A.C.E. 750	\$5699	cruiser	l/c 6v 745 V-twin	5/chain	505	27.6	63.6	33.0/157	3.7
Shadow VLX	\$4999	cruiser	l/c 6v 583 V-twin	5/chain	445	25.6	63.2	35.0/164	2.9
Rebel	\$2999	cruiser	a/c 4v 234 vertical-twin	5/chain	306	26.6	57.1	30.0/113	2.6
ST1100/ABS	\$11,899	sport-touring	l/c 16v 1084 V-four	5/shaft	639/659	31.5	61.2	27.3/101	7.4
CBR1100XX	\$10,999	sport	l/c 16v 1137 inline-four	6/chain	492	31.9	58.7	25.0/99	6.3
CBR929RR	\$9999	sport	l/c 16v 929 inline-four	6/chain	375	32.1	54.9	23.8/97	4.8
RC51	\$10,999	sport	l/c 8v 999 V-twin	6/chain	432	32.0	55.5	24.5/101	4.8
VFR800F Interceptor	\$9499	sport	l/c 16v 781 V-four	6/chain	463	31.7	56.7	25.3/95	5.5
VTR1000F Super Hawk	\$8999	sport	l/c 8v 996 V-twin	6/chain	423	31.9	56.3	24.0/97	4.8
CBR600F4i	\$8199	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	370	31.7	54.9	24.0/96	4.8

SP is the Superbike special; twice the price of the R
A Ducati 996 without the red mist
Saneer version of the Mille makes us go "woo-hoo"
Ring-ding its little neck...it loves the attention
Rare, small, slow...only you know if you want one
Other STs cower in the Futura's angular presence
A new home for Mille's engine, looks good from here
More street than sport; distanced from BMW's F650

German Gold Wing; still very much a BMW
Autobahn burner continues unchanged; not nimble
Our pick for 2000's touring bike of the year
Special editions fill out C lineup
Trading style for function but a watershed for BMW
We can't tell you exactly why we love this bike so...
Sportier, in-house GS should be debugged by now
Polarizing styling; typically high BMW quality
Revised basic boxer should be a real treat

Fairing and bags aim it at BMW; wide of the mark
Big attitude, little bodywork; reliable now?
Our fave Buell; \$200 Low option gets lower seat
Significant but unpolished...does polish matter here?

Duck-powered and quick reflexed...very nice

You can only dream; Ducati says it's sold out
Still brilliant and deadly serious, but aging rapidly
WSB-spec chassis mated to street-going 996 mill
Hanging with the supersport 600s and loving it
Charismatic air-cooled twin may be "classic" Duck
Small-bore 900SS sacrifices performance for price
New price leader gives up power and brakes
Lower price and standard hard bags improve value
Bucks down a bit for 2001, the ST2's a great deal
Hail the new wheelie king! 916 power makes us bulge
Cheaper and better...that's hooligan progress
Middle Monster may suffer Jan Brady syndrome
First time for the 600 here; watch out for SV650s

One notch down from the Ultra, a fine big rig
Blank canvas for hot-rod tourer, relatively cheap
Haul it all with substance and style; works good, too
Harley's sport-tourer with a killer stereo
Fun and functional, best parts of cruiser and tourer
H-D's bread and butter classic, just keeps selling
Huge pose factor now with competent engine
Our pick for cruiser of the year in 2000
Stripped-down springer; decent functionally
Hugely popular Dyna with kicked-out fork
Living large and selling well; you'll know if it's for you
Replaces Dyna Convertible; nicely equipped
If black is your thing, this is your chopper
Slammed suspension helps shorties, hurts ride
Sportiest Big Twin is among our favorite hogs
Bare bones Softail lets you customize with impunity
Entry-level Big Twin, still a pretty good piece
Custom big-inch Sporty leads the XL line
Sportiest Sportster will not harass many Buells
Basic 1200 still elemental; still a paint shaker
Cheapest Harley you can buy; basic and slightly crude

Completely new for 2001, resetting the standard
Previous-gen GL engine still hot to trot
Cruiser-based tourer; more competent than cool
Hard to argue with 100 foot-pounds of torque, eh?
Nice ride about to be obsoleted by 2002 VTX
Tough-guy custom growls but doesn't bite
Original VT1100 resurrected for the budget-minded
Budget cruiser with old engine and new styling licks
V-four power gives the Magna real performance
Midsize A.C.E. with fat tires and lots of chrome
Mini Shadow's lack of punch is fine for beginners
Nicely finished for the price, but very slow
Functional and evergreen; ABS/TCS is \$2500 option
Not the most hyper big-bore but finely polished
Beat the R1 in our open-class shootout in 2000
A champion the first time out; a genuine achievement
Sport-touring with real sport, a big favorite here
Probably the last year for this all-around sport twin
Honda injects the F4; will it beat the R6 and GSX-R?

Steel Yourself

HOW-TO

Swapping lines with the best of 'em

ONE WAY TO IMPROVE BRAKE-SYSTEM performance and feedback is to replace the standard rubber lines with high-performance braided-steel components.

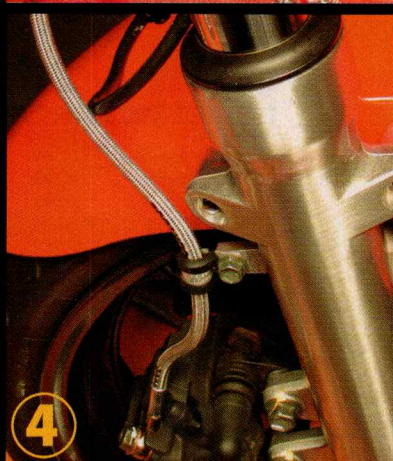
Before you unbolt anything from your bike, lay out the new line kit and make sure you have all the parts and that the lines are approximately the right length. There's nothing worse than getting all revved up only to find you've got a short hose. Prepare to remove the stock system by first draining the old fluid (1). You can open a bleeder on a caliper and pump out most of the juice that way. Make a note of how the stock lines are routed; taking a photo isn't a bad idea, either. Carefully remove the old lines, watching for fluid that may fall onto paint—DOT 3 and 4 fluids are highly corrosive.

Loose-fit the new lines to get an idea of where they'll be routed (2). Make sure you have enough slack to accommodate suspension and steering movement. If your kit comes with antichafe wrap, install it now and position it close to the final location. Most banjo heads are angled to ease installation; make sure they're not working against you. Orient the lines so there are no loops above the level of the master cylinder that could harbor air pockets.

Use new copper washers with steel fittings (and aluminum washers with aluminum fittings) and hand-tighten the fittings (3). Most kits will come with new sealing washers...use them. Begin bolting the system in place, starting at the master cylinder and working down or back. Again, try to visualize how the suspension travel will affect line angle and placement, and position the lines to avoid big loops and tight sections (4).

Final-torque the fittings and fill the master cylinder with fresh fluid. Make sure you have enough in hand to fully flush the system; a pint is usually enough. A vacuum bleeder such as a Mityvac will speed this operation. Bleed as normal, but make sure you turn the handlebars so that the master cylinder is the highest part of the system. Many setups have the outlet port angled up, and double-banjo fittings often end up above the level of the bleed hole that feeds the actuating piston (5). If you have trouble getting a firm lever, tap the lines with a wrench or screwdriver handle to liberate pesky air bubbles.

Often, with the rear brake, it's necessary



to remove the caliper from the mount and position it so that it's clearly above or below the master cylinder and that there are no air-trapping loops in the line.

Hose off the calipers and discs with brake cleaner and you're done.

2001 the list

model	price	class	engine (note 1)	speeds/ final drive	dry weight (lb.)	seat height (in.)	wheel- base (in.)	rake (deg)/ trail (mm)	fuel cap. (gal.)
CB750 Nighthawk	\$5799	standard	a/c 16v 747 inline-four	5/chain	463	30.9	59.3	29.0/180	4.8
CB250 Nighthawk	\$3399	standard	a/c 4v 234 vertical-twin	5/chain	287	29.3	56.3	28.0/109	4.3
HUSQVARNA 1901 DAVISVILLE ROAD WILLOW GROVE, PA 19090; 215/830-3300 WWW.HUSQVARNAUSA.COM									
SM610S	\$6499	super-motard	l/c 4v 576 single	6/chain	331	33.9	59.3	27.0/88	2.4
TE610E	\$6399	dual-sport	l/c 4v 576 single	6/chain	330	35.4	58.5	27.5/116	2.4
KAWASAKI 9950 JERONIMO ROAD IRVINE, CA 92618; 949/770-0400 WWW.KAWASAKI.COM									
Nomad FI	\$12,999	touring	l/c 8v 1470 V-twin	5/shaft	739	28.3	65.6	32.0/188	5.0
Nomad	\$12,299	touring	l/c 8v 1470 V-twin	5/shaft	732	28.3	65.6	32.0/188	4.2
Voyager XII	\$12,299	touring	l/c 16v 1196 inline-four	6/shaft	728	29.7	63.8	30.0/122	6.1
Ninja ZX-12R	\$11,999	sport	l/c 16v 1198 inline-four	6/chain	463	31.9	56.7	23.5/94	5.3
Ninja ZX-9R	\$10,199	sport	l/c 16v 899 inline-four	6/chain	404	31.9	55.7	24.0/97	5.0
Ninja ZX-11	\$10,199	sport	l/c 16v 1052 inline-four	6/chain	514	30.7	58.9	26.5/107	6.3
Ninja ZX-7R	\$9299	sport	l/c 16v 748 inline-four	6/chain	448	31.1	56.5	25.0/99	4.8
Ninja ZX-6R	\$8099	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	377	32.3	55.1	23.5/91	4.8
Ninja ZX-6	\$7199	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	430	30.7	56.3	24.5/97	4.8
Ninja 500R	\$5099	sport	l/c 8v 498 vertical twin	6/chain	388	30.5	56.5	27.0/91	4.8
Ninja 250R	\$3299	sport	l/c 8v 248 vertical twin	6/chain	304	29.3	55.1	27.0/84	4.8
1500 Drifter	\$11,799	cruiser	l/c 8v 1470 V-twin	5/shaft	668	29.1	65.2	32.0/163	5.0
Vulcan 1500 FI	\$10,799	cruiser	l/c 8v 1470 V-twin	5/shaft	659	29.1	65.4	32.0/122	5.0
Vulcan 1500 Classic	\$9999	cruiser	l/c 8v 1470 V-twin	5/shaft	644	29.1	65.4	32.0/122	5.0
800 Drifter	\$7499	cruiser	l/c 8v 805 V-twin	5/chain	547	29.9	63.6	31.5/157	4.0
Vulcan 800 Classic	\$6999	cruiser	l/c 8v 805 V-twin	5/chain	516	27.8	63.0	32.0/122	4.0
Vulcan 800	\$6299	cruiser	l/c 8v 805 V-twin	5/chain	496	28.0	64.0	34.0/150	4.0
Vulcan 750	\$6099	cruiser	l/c 8v 749 V-twin	5/shaft	483	28.9	62.2	32.0/127	3.6
Vulcan 500 LTD	\$4699	cruiser	l/c 8v 498 vertical-twin	5/chain	496	28.1	62.8	33.0/150	4.0
Eliminator 125	\$2499	cruiser	l/c 4v 124 V-twin	5/chain	282	26.8	57.9	34.0/122	3.4
W650	\$6599	cruiser	a/c 8v 676 vertical-twin	5/chain	434	31.5	57.1	27.0/104	4.0
Concours	\$8199	sport-touring	l/c 16v 997 inline-four	6/shaft	595	31.1	61.2	28.5/122	7.5
ZRX1200R	\$7899	standard	l/c 16v 1164 inline-four	5/chain	NA	31.1	57.6	25.0/104	5.3
ZR-7S	\$5999	standard	a/c 8v 738 inline-four	5/chain	445	31.5	57.3	25.5/144	5.8
KLR650	\$4999	dual-sport	l/c 4v 651 single	5/chain	337	35.0	58.9	28.0/112	6.1
Super Sherpa	\$3999	dual-sport	a/c 4v 249 single	6/chain	249	32.7	54.1	28.0/107	2.4
KLR250	\$4149	dual-sport	l/c 4v 249 single	6/chain	258	33.7	55.7	28.5/117	2.9
KE100	\$1999	dual-sport	a/c 2st 99 single	5/chain	187	31.7	50.6	30.5/119	2.4
KTM 1200 BILLY MITCHELL DRIVE, SUITE D EL CAJON, CA 92020; 440/985-3553 WWW.KTMUSA.COM									
Duke II	\$8198	sport	l/c 4v 625 single	5/chain	320	33.8	57.5	25.8/NA	3.0
LC8 Adventurer	NA	dual-sport	l/c 8v 942 V-twin	6/chain	416	36.2	61.8	26.6/119	6.9
LC4 Adventurer R	\$8198	dual-sport	l/c 4v 625 single	5/chain	340	35.4	59.5	28.0/NA	7.4
640 LC4/400 LC4	\$6998	dual-sport	l/c 4v 625/398 single	5/chain	340	37.6	59.5	27.5/NA	3.0
LC4 Super Moto	\$7298	super motard	l/c 4v 625 single	5/chain	302	36.8	59.5	28.0/NA	3.0
LAVERDA 110 LONDONDERRY COURT SUITE 130 WOODSTOCK, GA 30188; 770/592-2261 WWW.APRILIA.COM									
750 Formula	\$10,595	sport	l/c 8v 747 vertical-twin	6/chain	412	NA	54.2	26.3/103	5.0
750 Supersport	\$9495	sport	l/c 8v 747 vertical-twin	6/chain	412	NA	54.2	26.3/103	5.0
Strike Cafe Racer	\$8995	sport	l/c 8v 747 vertical-twin	6/chain	412	NA	54.2	26.3/103	5.0
Strike	\$8495	sport	l/c 8v 747 vertical-twin	6/chain	418	NA	54.2	26.3/103	5.0
MOTO GUZZI 455 WEST DEPOT STREET ANGIER, NC 27501; 919/639-3180 WWW.MOTOGUZZI-US.COM									
V11 Sport	\$11,900	sport	a/c 4v 1064 V-twin	6/shaft	472	31.0	NA	NA/NA	5.5
California Special	\$11,700	cruiser	a/c 4v 1064 V-twin	5/shaft	545	28.8	NA	NA/NA	5.0
California Jackal	\$8495	cruiser	a/c 4v 1064 V-twin	5/shaft	542	29.0	61.5	28.0/154	5.0
Quota	\$9995	dual-sport	a/c 4v 1064 V-twin	5/shaft	541	32.8	61.0	NA/NA	5.2
MuZ 4 SIGNAL AVENUE, SUITE C ORMOND BEACH, FL 32174; 904/676-1056 WWW.MOTORRADNA.COM									
Black Panther	\$7995	sport	l/c 5v 660 single	5/chain	345	34.5	59.5	NA/NA	3.0
Skorpion Traveller	\$6495	sport-touring	l/c 5v 660 single	5/chain	415	31.0	56.0	NA/NA	4.7
Skorpion Sport Cup	\$5795	sport	l/c 5v 660 single	5/chain	382	31.0	56.0	NA/NA	4.7
Skorpion Tour	\$4995	standard	l/c 5v 660 single	5/chain	374	31.0	56.0	NA/NA	5.0
MV AGUSTA 1901 DAVISVILLE ROAD WILLOW GROVE, PA 19090; 215/830-3300 WWW.MVAGUSTAUSA.COM									
Brutale Serie Oro	NA	standard	l/c 16v 750 inline-four	6/chain	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
F4S 750 Strada	\$18,895	sport	l/c 16v 750 inline-four	6/chain	397	31.1	55.6	24.5/104	5.8
SUZUKI 3251 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY BREA, CA 92821; 714/996-7040 WWW.SUZUKI.COM									
GSX1300R Hayabusa	\$10,849	sport	l/c 16v 1299 inline-four	6/chain	473	31.7	58.5	24.0/97	5.8
GSX-R600	\$7999	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	359	32.7	55.1	24.0/96	4.8
GSX-R750	\$9449	sport	l/c 16v 749 inline-four	6/chain	366	32.6	55.5	24.0/94	4.8
GSX-R1000	\$10,399	sport	l/c 988 inline-four	6/chain	375	32.3	55.5	24.0/96	4.8
TL1000R	\$9599	sport	l/c 8v 996 V-twin	6/chain	434	32.5	54.9	23.0/90	4.5
TL1000S	\$9099	sport	l/c 8v 996 V-twin	6/chain	421	32.9	55.7	23.0/95	4.5
SV650S	\$6199	sport	l/c 8v 645 V-twin	6/chain	372	31.7	55.9	25.0/100	4.2
1500 Intruder LC	\$9999	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1462 V-twin	5/shaft	644	27.6	66.9	32.0/138	4.1
1400 Intruder	\$8349	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1360 V-twin	5/shaft	535	27.6	63.5	32.0/166	3.4
VL800 Volusia	\$6599	cruiser	l/c 4v 805 V-twin	5/shaft	NA	27.6	64.7	33.0/141	4.2
800 Intruder	\$6399	cruiser	l/c 8v 805 V-twin	5/shaft	443	28.9	61.4	32.0/138	3.2
Marauder	\$5999	cruiser	l/c 8v 805 V-twin	5/chain	456	27.6	64.8	35.0/146	3.4
Savage	\$4299	cruiser	a/c 4v 652 single	5/belt	352	27.6	58.3	35.0/147	2.8
GZ250	\$2999	cruiser	a/c 2v 249 single	5/chain	308	27.8	57.1	32.0/140	3.7
1200S Bandit	\$7399	sport-touring	a-o/c 16v 1157 inline-four	5/chain	471	32.9	56.5	25.0/107	5.0
GSX750F Katana	\$7299	sport-touring	a-o/c 16v 749 inline-four	6/chain	469	31.1	57.7	25.0/100	5.3
GSX600F Katana	\$6299	sport-touring	a-o/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	458	30.9	57.9	25.0/100	5.3
600S Bandit	\$5849	sport-touring	a-o/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	449	31.1	56.4	25.0/100	5.3
SV650	\$5799	standard	l/c 8v 645 V-twin	6/chain	363	31.7	56.3	25.0/100	4.2
GS500E	\$4399	standard	a/c 4v 487 vertical-twin	6/chain	372	31.1	55.0	25.0/95	4.0
DR650SE	\$5449	dual-sport	a-o/c 4v 644 single	5/chain	324	33.0	58.7	28.0/111	3.4
DR-2400S	\$5449	dual-sport	l/c 4v 398 single	5/chain	291	36.8	58.1	27.0/109	2.6

verdict

Still with us, still selling well, still fun
MSF drop doggie on a cat-food budget (still!)

Husky's answer to KTM's awesome Duke II
A true enduro-racer with lights

Cruiser-based tourer with excellent injection
Fewer bucks and horses, not long in tooth
Old tourer hanging in there, about to earn retirement
Ferociously fast but not perfectly finished
Overshadowed by 929 and R1, great in the real world
With the 12R here, it's starting to show its age
Playing longer than *Cats*; what's new Kawasaki?
Smooth and comfy, right there with the F4 and R6
Feeling old next to the almost-as-comfortable 6R
Tot-sized twin with major-league fun factor
Our favorite 250; damning with faint praise?
For '01: larger fuel tank, solo seat and more chrome
Team Green's hot big-bore continues unchanged
Function and style merge for reasonable cash
Same updates as 1500, lacks only a few foot-pounds
Custom-styled V-twin remains a good seller
Save on the buy and spend on the aftermarket
Low price saves out-dated styling
Barstool-busting parallel-twin cleans up in the 500 class
All-new beginner bike; will 125cc be enough?
Bonnie-buddy gets chassis tweaks for '01
Popular and inexpensive ST getting varicose veins
Upping the ante at the naked table; watch out!
Half-faired version of KZ750-engined cheapster
Long-running model refined into super dual-sport
Entry-level model excellent for dirty newbies
Smaller KLR may be your next ranch hand
Hey...a two-stroke! Smoke 'em if you got 'em

If you can't get arrested on one of these...
Could be fun if you can keep it from falling on you
Huge P/D repbike, park next to your Excursion
More dirty than streety, but that's fine by us
Jesse Ventura would ride one

High-end parallel twin needs further development
Cheaper version with all the same foibles
Laverda's version of the Triumph Speed Triple
Naked and less expensive, but is that enough?

A stripped Guzzi in the V7 tradition; great 'box
Guzzi cruiser stands ready for factory custom stuff
Simple, sporty cruiser that's also reasonably priced
Elderly adventurer-tourer; name your price

Who names these things, anyway?
Sport Cup with hard luggage, bigger fairing
Same Yamaha-built engine, less flash and less cash
Looks (and runs) like an SV650 with a lung removed

Monster? What's a Monster?
Exotic, desirable, competent; what else do you need?

Still the fastest open-class GT, and our favorite
All that's right with the new 750 in a middleweight
Motorcycle of the Year for 2000; stunning and fun
Stand back you wussie 929s and R1s!
Big and beefy sporty twin, days may be numbered
Likely to become a standardized SV1000 next year
Half-faired version finally comes here; a bit sedate
Big cruiser is actually a pretty good piece
U.S.-designed cruiser still with us, punchy engine
Marauder-based cruiser should be competent
Smaller, old-style intruder continues to sell well
Bargain bruiser; a Magna without as much grunt
A decent little cruising single, if a bit basic
A bit wheezy next to the 250 twins but nicely built
Renewed for 2001 and better than ever; a great buy
Popular, reasonably cheap, old GSX-R750 power
Popular, even cheaper, early GSX-R600 power
Hard to distinguish from the 1200S
How long before every MC editor owns one?
Mild updates for 2001, but nothing major
Suzuki's street-sized big-bore dual-sport
An impressive d/p bike—a do-it-all machine

Answers



WORKING OUT

I've been riding a 1999 TL1000R for the last 16 months (my first bike). I'm curious to know if you have ever heard of it being more difficult to lean a V-twin vs. an inline-four? Could it just be inexperience, or does the bike play some sort of role in this?

Carlton Thomas
Hawaii

It's not just your imagination. All other things being equal (rake, trail and wheel-base), your average 1000cc twin has a considerably heavier crankshaft than your average 1000cc four, and that greater gyroscopic effect makes transverse-crank twins like your TL1000R slightly more reluctant to change direction compared with a four. A good example of that principle is Honda's V-4 500cc GP bike: The Honda is famous for stability at the expense of maneuverability, mainly because all four of its cylinders work the same crank, while the rival Suzuki and Yamaha change direction much easier thanks to twin, contra-rotating crankshafts which cancel each others' gyroscopic force.

Motorcycles that concentrate their heaviest components nearest the center of gravity also turn easier, and inline-fours are more pack-ageable in that respect, too. In exchange for the twin's (barely) heavier steering you get greater stability—theoretically anyway.

GASEOUS

Will you tell me if it is OK to inflate my tires with nitrogen, or should I be using air only? Nitrogen is readily available to me at home but I do not know if it has the proper expansion rate under different climatic condi-

tions. I live in Fresno, California, where the summers are hot, hot, hot.
Tom Valoff
Via e-mail

As a matter of fact, it was common for racers to use nitrogen in their tires for the very reason that it doesn't expand as much as air on hot days. Instead of an air-filled tire gaining three or four psi on a hot day, the nitrogen-filled one gains very little. Can you do it? Sure. Does it matter a whit? Not unless you're chasing Carlos Checa.

FROZEN MAN

The temperature was 33 degrees Fahrenheit this morning when I rode to work. I sure could use a few tips on how I can keep my hands/fingers from getting numb. I ride a straight-up motorcycle, no fairing or windshield. What works?

Eugene
Someplace chilly

Why not surf over to www.aerostich.com for a set of Warm Wrap Grips, with an on/off switch, for \$47. For a permanent installation, try Hot Grips (www.hotgrips.com). While you're at it, having a warm torso does wonders for keeping your blood supply toasty; an electric vest is just the thing. Warm-gripwise, though, we've always wanted to try legendary BMW guy Helmut Dahne's trick, which he claims enabled him to win some godforsaken frozen race somewhere we've forgotten. Dahne routed his BMW's oil supply through its handlebar—in one end and out the other—and says it kept his fingers completely thawed. The grips are probably a simpler solution.

Send your questions to *Motorcyclist*, Attn: Answers, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515; fax them to (323) 782-2372; or e-mail us at mcmal@emapusa.com. Time doesn't permit personal replies and the editors reserve the right to edit all letters, which must be exclusive to *Motorcyclist*.

2001 the list

model	price	class	engine (note 1)	speeds/ final drive	dry weight (lb.)	seat height (in.)	wheel- base (in.)	rake (deg)/ trail (mm)	fuel cap. (gal.)
DR200SE	\$3899	dual-sport	a/c 4v 199 single	5/chain	249	31.9	55.3	29.0/112	3.4
TRIUMPH 403 DIVIDEND DRIVE PEACHTREE CITY, GA 30269; 770/631-9500 WWW.TRIUMPH.CO.UK									
Trophy 1200	\$11,999	sport-touring	l/c 16v 1180 inline-four	6/chain	518	31.1	58.7	27.0/105	6.6
Trophy 900	\$10,999	sport-touring	l/c 12v 885 inline-three	6/chain	455	31.1	58.7	27.0/105	6.6
Sprint ST	\$10,799	sport-touring	l/c 12v 955 inline-three	6/chain	456	31.5	57.9	25.0/92	5.6
Daytona	\$10,999	sport	l/c 12v 955 inline-three	6/chain	436	31.5	56.3	24.0/86	4.8
Speed Triple	\$10,499	sport	l/c 12v 955 inline-three	6/chain	432	31.5	56.7	24.0/86	4.8
Sprint RS	\$9499	sport	l/c 12v 955 inline-three	6/chain	438	31.7	57.9	24.5/89	5.6
TT600	\$8299	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	374	31.9	54.9	24.0/89	4.8
Tiger	\$10,799	dual-sport	l/c 12v 955 inline-three	6/chain	474	33.1	61.0	28.0/92	6.4
Adventurer	\$8999	cruiser	l/c 12v 885 inline-three	5/chain	464	28.5	63.8	30.0/130	4.0
Thunderbird	\$8999	cruiser	l/c 12v 885 inline-three	6/chain	485	30.5	62.2	27.0/106	4.0
Legend TT	\$7799	cruiser	l/c 12v 885 inline-three	5/chain	473	28.5	62.2	27.0/106	4.0
Bonneville	\$6999	standard	l/c 4v 790 parallel-twin	5/chain	451	31.5	57.0	29.0/117	4.3
VICTORY 2100 HIGHWAY 55 MEDINA, MN 55340; 612/542-0500 WWW.POLARISINDUSTRIES.COM									
V92C Deluxe	\$14,599	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1507 V-twin	5/belt	657	28.5	63.6	30.0/120	5.0
V92SC	\$13,999	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1507 V-twin	5/belt	657	28.5	63.6	30.0/120	5.0
V92C	\$13,499	cruiser	a-o/c 8v 1507 V-twin	5/belt	657	28.5	63.6	30.0/120	5.0
YAMAHA 6555 KATELLA AVENUE CYPRESS, CA 90630; 714/761-7300 WWW.YAMAHA-MOTOR.COM									
Royal Star Venture	\$16,399	touring	l/c 16v 1294 V-four	5/shaft	807	29.5	67.1	30.0/126	6.0
RS Tour Deluxe	\$15,499	touring	l/c 16v 1294 V-four	5/shaft	728	28.5	66.7	30.0/126	4.8
Royal Star	\$13,949	cruiser	l/c 16v 1294 V-four	5/shaft	672	28.1	66.7	30.0/126	4.8
Road Star Silverado	\$12,399	cruiser	a/c 8v 1602 V-twin	5/belt	710	27.9	66.3	32.0/142	5.3
Road Star Midnight Star	\$11,799	cruiser	a/c 8v 1602 V-twin	5/belt	677	27.9	66.3	32.0/142	5.3
Road Star	\$10,999	cruiser	a/c 8v 1602 V-twin	5/belt	677	27.9	66.3	32.0/142	5.3
V-Max	\$10,899	cruiser	l/c 16v 1198 V-four	5/shaft	581	30.1	62.6	29.0/119	4.0
V-Star 1100 Classic	\$8199	cruiser	a/c 4v 1063 V-twin	5/shaft	599	27.9	64.8	33.0/136	4.5
V-Star 1100 Custom	\$7899	cruiser	a/c 4v 1063 V-twin	5/shaft	571	27.0	64.5	33.0/136	4.5
V-Star Classic	\$5899	cruiser	a/c 4v 649 V-twin	5/shaft	495	28.0	64.0	35.0/NA	4.2
V-Star Custom	\$5599	cruiser	a/c 4v 649 V-twin	5/shaft	460	25.6	64.0	35.0/NA	4.2
Virago 250	\$3399	cruiser	a/c 4v 249 V-twin	5/chain	302	27.0	58.6	32.0/120	2.5
YZF-R1	\$10,299	sport	l/c 20v 998 inline-four	6/chain	385	32.0	54.9	24.0/92	4.7
YZF-R6	\$7999	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	365	32.8	54.4	24.0/81	4.5
YZF600R	\$6999	sport	l/c 16v 599 inline-four	6/chain	416	31.7	55.7	25.0/97	5.0
FZ1	\$8499	standard	l/c 20v 998 inline-four	6/chain	458	32.3	57.1	NA/NA	5.6
XT225	\$3999	dual-sport	a/c 4v 223 single	6/chain	238	31.9	53.1	26.5/102	2.3
TW200	\$3599	dual-sport	a/c 2v 346 single	5/chain	262	31.1	52.2	26.5/94	1.9



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verdict

Basic and fun wheels for entry-level folks

Touring model with a replacement expected soon
Trophy chassis package, three-cylinder propulsion
Finally a BRG version; keeps the VFR800 honest
Due for a redesign soon, but still haughty
You'll know you love it from a half-mile away
Sportier than the ST, just as beautifully torquey
New cams and tune for '01 may save this bike
Now with stonking Sprint ST power—yee haw!
A custom T-bird with V-twin-squashing power
Retro-cruiser looks, naked-bike performance
Entry-level Britbike, torquey and talented triple
Hugely anticipated and amazingly inexpensive

Revision for '01 to bring function up to par
Plenty of sporty function, tranny *still* needs help
Fewer rough edges, but not up to Japanese standards

Retro looks, long-haul function, needs new 'shield
A decent touring cruiser in need of some punch
Standard Star also wants a horsepower injection
Touring version of the highly competent Road Star
Blacked-out version should broaden model's appeal
Functional and handsome, what else do you need?
A legend retires; this is (supposedly) its last year
Middle-range big cruiser plows ahead
Less retro, same great low price
"Heritage" styling but mostly modern underneath
More custom than nostalgic; same chassis/engine
A cheap V-twin that'll get you in the game
Unchanged for '01; champs edition has new paint
Faces tough competition from new GSX-R and F4i
Understandably overlooked, but a real gem
Oooh, oooh...we want one
Lightweight and fun entry-level dual-sport
A fat-tired fun-bike for the family

Following Distance

WHATEVER THEY taught you in driver's ed regarding following distance should go right out the window when you're on your motorcycle, particularly on a multi-lane highway. At one time the rule of thumb for car drivers was one vehicle length for every 10

mph, a rule more observed in the breach city-wide. On a bike you should leave more room than that, say, a two- to three-second gap—not because you can't stop fast, but because the sort of foreign object debris that will scratch a car's fender can send a motorcyclist on to his reward. Ever seen an aluminum ladder come flying out from under the car ahead? Things like that tend to break up into pieces, and it's nice to have time to estimate the bigger chunks'

STREET SAVVY

trajectories so as to avoid them. Gee, won't I see the car ahead swerve or hit its brake lights? Not in Los Angeles, where the following rule for cars is more like one inch for every 10 mph. By the time the car driver puts down the crack pipe and reacts, the ladder (or hunk of carpet, donkey piñata, shovel, whatever) is already shooting out from under his bumper and into your forecourt. Be ready.

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Evasive Action

TECHNIQUE

IT'S TRUE: NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU'VE been riding or how proficient a rider you are, you'll eventually come face-to-face with a situation that demands some sort of evasive maneuver. Whether it's a left-turning car blowing into your lane, a deer jumping in front of you or a child running into the street from between parked cars, you have to act evasively—and *right away*—or end up dealing with the consequences, 99 percent of which aren't pretty.

You've got three choices, really, when it comes to evasive maneuvers: accelerating, braking or swerving, or some combination thereof. One of the best treatments we've found on the subject is contained in *Proficient Motorcycling: The Ultimate Guide to Riding Well*, David L. Hough's excellent book on motorcycle riding basics (available for \$24.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling through Bowtie Press, 888/644-8387 ext. 102). The key, Hough writes, is to train yourself to make the decision on whether to brake, speed up or swerve in a split second—and that means considering the options before trouble appears in the first place.

Hough writes that speeding up can be

advantageous in some situations due to a bike's inherent acceleration abilities. But because whacking open the throttle produces more speed (and, therefore, more energy), the downside can be much worse,



especially if the car that just pulled into your lane beats you to the collision point. And crashing at a higher speed isn't, of course, a desired result.

Swerving, the second option, can be a good choice *if* traction and circumstances permit. The main problem here, according to Hough, is that even when conditions seem right for a quick and successful swerve, the unpredictable behavior of drivers, children

and animals makes undertaking such maneuvers tricky at best. Will that deer spook and jump in front of you when it notices you? Will that frightened little boy back up into your path after he discovers his mistake? "The best practice for swerving," he writes, "is probably riding a really twisty road...." Less-experienced riders will likely do no more than a gentle swerve when a

max-lean action is called for, while riders with more backroad experience will likely swerve dramatically—and successfully—when such action is needed.

Option three is braking, and it's the method Hough feels is usually best for left-turn/intersection and wild-animal situations, thanks to the excellence of the brakes and tires on today's motorcycles. A proficient rider, he

writes, can usually stop a motorcycle traveling 40 mph in less than 100 feet (including a half-second reaction time). Still, learning to stop your bike in minimum time and distance takes plenty of practice.

The bottom line, though, remains the rider's ability to make split-second decisions—and that can only happen with lots of miles combined with the right attitude and facts about proficient riding.

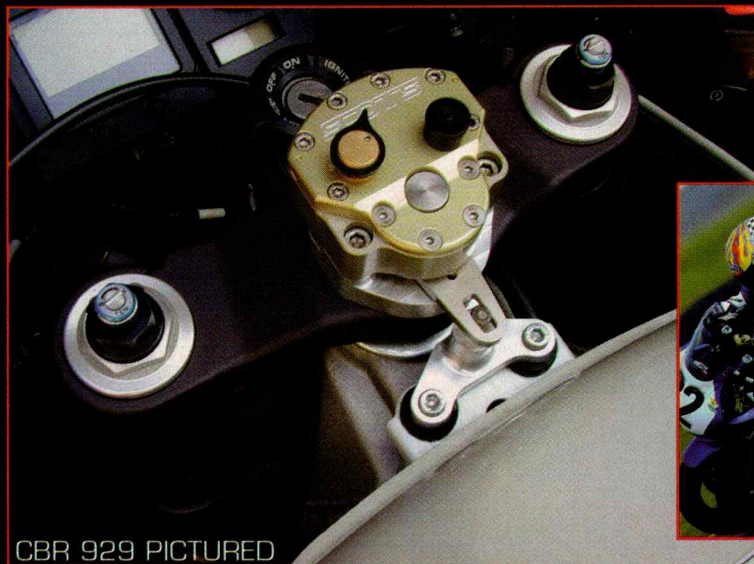
DEAN GROOVER

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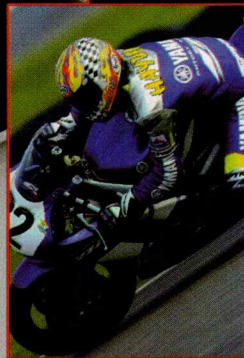


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motorcycle	measured hp (@ rpm)	measured torque (foot-pounds @ rpm)	corrected best 1/4 mi.* (sec. @ mph)	top-gear roll-ons 60-80 mph (sec.)	wet weight (lb.)	fuel consumption (avg. mpg)	last** tested
Aprilia RSV Mille ('00)	113.6 @ 9500	71.6 @ 7000	10.58 @ 131.5	3.80	490	39	4/00
Aprilia SL1000 ('00)	110.4 @ 9500	69.3 @ 7100	10.99 @ 125.0	4.56	485	39	8/00
BMW F650GS ('00)	43.5 @ 6250	40.3 @ 4500	13.76 @ 91.6	6.03	442	45	7/00
BMW K1200LT ('99)	90.0 @ 6200		13.31 @ 101.0	8.00	849	41	8/99
BMW K1200RS ('98)	111.1 @ 8250	79.1 @ 6750	11.77 @ 118.2		643	36	8/97
BMW R1100S ('00)	92.2 @ 7250	70.9 @ 5750	12.67 @ 111.0	5.44	545	31	6/00
BMW R1150GS ('00)	79.7 @ 6500	72.2 @ 5500	12.84 @ 103.1	6.59	586	42	12/99
BMW R1200C ('98)	56.4 @ 5000	63.6 @ 3000	14.24 @ 91.2		560	44	12/97
Buell S3 Thunderbolt ('99)	90.1 @ 6500	78.1 @ 6000	11.90 @ 113.2		514	47	10/98
Buell S3T Thunderbolt ('97)	76.9 @ 5750	72.8 @ 5000	12.45 @ 107.3	7.69	520	44	2/98
Ducati 748 ('97)	89.7 @ 10,500	51.7 @ 8500	11.59 @ 119.7		472	43	5/97
Ducati 996 ('99)	109.8 @ 8750	69.6 @ 6750	10.61 @ 130.2	5.35	478	40	3/99
Ducati Supersport 900 ('99)	77.4 @ 8000	57.3 @ 5750	11.65 @ 114.9	5.26	444	44	11/98
Ducati Supersport 900 i.e. ('00)	77.5 @ 7750	59.3 @ 5750	11.99 @ 109.5	5.61	444	43	6/00
Ducati ST2 ('98)	75.4 @ 8500	56.6 @ 6500	12.39 @ 106.2	5.42	532	42	2/98
Ducati ST4 ('99)	105.5 @ 9250	63.3 @ 7250	11.03 @ 123.8	4.88	525	44	2/99
H-D FLHCR1 Road King Classic ('99)	62.4 @ 5250	77.2 @ 3000	13.99 @ 94.5	5.32	744	43	12/98
H-D FLTR/FLTRI Road Glide ('98)			14.39 @ 90.7	9.02	762	46	6/98
H-D FXDX Dyna Super Glide Sport ('99)	62.5 @ 5500	76.3 @ 3250	13.54 @ 96.5	5.82	651	39	11/98
H-D S.E. Road Glide ('00)	70.8 @ 5250	86.4 @ 2750	13.93 @ 93.1	6.71	828	33	5/00
H-D Sportster XL1200S Sport ('98)	57.0 @ 5250	66.3 @ 3250	13.65 @ 96.1	4.99	524	41	1/98
Honda CBR600F3 ('97)	93.5 @ 11,750	44.5 @ 10,000	11.30 @ 120.8	4.53	459	46	5/97
Honda CBR600F4 ('00)	94.8 @ 12,500	44.8 @ 10,000	11.61 @ 115.9	6.76	436	41	8/00
Honda CBR900RR ('98)	111.4 @ 10,000	63.7 @ 8000	10.65 @ 130.2	3.70	448	42	6/98
Honda CBR929RR ('00)	122.7 @ 11,000	63.9 @ 9250	10.31 @ 134.5	3.37	434	38	7/00
Honda CBR1100XX ('97)	136.7 @ 9500	80.9 @ 7500	10.20 @ 134.5		556	39	2/97
Honda GL1500 Gold Wing SE ('99)	85.0 @ 5000		13.52 @ 96.1	7.12	911	31	8/99
Honda GL1500C Valkyrie ('97)	95.9 @ 5500	96.1 @ 4000	12.13 @ 107.0		739	32	1/97
Honda RC51 ('00)	118.5 @ 9000	72.1 @ 7500	10.97 @ 128.2	4.94	489	38	8/00
Honda Shadow A.C.E. Tourer ('98)			13.91 @ 92.2		663	37	7/97
Honda ST1100 ABSII-TCS ('96)	87.0 @ 7250	72.2 @ 5250	12.40 @ 106.0		726	42	8/96
Honda Valkyrie Interstate ('99)	97.1 @ 5750	97.3 @ 4500	12.76 @ 100.8	6.38	859	31	8/99
Honda VFR800F Interceptor ('98)	97.0 @ 10,500	54.9 @ 8500	11.14 @ 122.2	5.23	515	38	8/99
Honda VTR1000F Super Hawk ('00)	100.7 @ 8250	67.0 @ 6250	11.47 @ 119.4	5.00	480	31	6/00
Kawasaki Vulcan 1500 Classic FI ('00)	54.6 @ 5000	73.6 @ 2500	14.07 @ 92.6	9.43	727	41	9/00
Kawasaki Vulcan 1500 Nomad ('99)	51.0 @ 4500	72.3 @ 2500	15.33 @ 85.8	8.27	775	34	12/98
Kawasaki W650 ('00)	44.8 @ 6750	38.4 @ 5250	14.19 @ 90.4	9.36	473	44	8/00
Kawasaki ZX-6R Ninja ('00)	96.2 @ 12,500	44.7 @ 10,250	11.38 @ 120.5	5.26	434	43	8/00
Kawasaki ZX-7R Ninja ('96)	114.5 @ 11,250	57.1 @ 9000	10.82 @ 129.7		519	39	4/96
Kawasaki ZX-9R Ninja ('00)	131.4 @ 10,500	71.7 @ 9000	10.26 @ 133.9	3.41	466	38	7/00
Kawasaki ZX-12R Ninja ('00)	162.7 @ 10,000	93.7 @ 7500	9.96 @ 142.3	3.23	547	37	6/00
Moto Guzzi Sport 1100i ('97)	73.3 @ 7000	61.5 @ 5750	12.79 @ 105.5	5.20	538	39	8/97
Moto Guzzi V11 Jackal ('00)	63.2 @ 6500	59.9 @ 5250	13.74 @ 98.0	7.60	564	42	2/00
Moto Guzzi V11 Sport ('00)	80.6 @ 7750	65.0 @ 5750	12.18 @ 110.9	5.14	546	40	10/00
MV Agusta F4 Strada ('00)	114.6 @ 12,750	52.6 @ 10,250	11.09 @ 128.0	4.86	480	33	9/00
Suzuki Bandit 600S ('00)	72.9 @ 10,750	38.6 @ 9000	12.59 @ 106.8	6.76	510	40	5/00
Suzuki Bandit 1200S ('01)	101.6 @ 8250	71.8 @ 7250	11.15 @ 121.8	4.02	543	40	10/00
Suzuki GSX1300R Hayabusa ('99)	156.1 @ 9500	99.0 @ 6750	10.34 @ 140.8	2.70	550	36	6/99
Suzuki GSX-R600 ('00)	93.3 @ 11,750	44.5 @ 10,000	11.47 @ 119.9	5.41	447	39	8/00
Suzuki GSX-R750 ('00)	123.0 @ 12,500	57.7 @ 10,000	10.26 @ 135.6	4.11	426	36	7/00
Suzuki GSX-R1100 ('96)	123.4 @ 9500	75.9 @ 7000	10.50 @ 129.5		554	41	10/97
Suzuki SV650S ('01)	65.8 @ 9250	42.6 @ 7500	12.60 @ 109.4	5.13	428	42	1/01
Suzuki TL1000S ('00)	106.1 @ 8250	69.1 @ 6500	11.15 @ 121.1	4.61	487	42	6/00
Suzuki TL1000R ('98)	121.1 @ 9000	74.9 @ 7250	10.76 @ 129.1	4.30	505	40	10/98
Triumph Legend TT ('00)	67.4 @ 7750	51.9 @ 4000	13.32 @ 96.7	5.87	522	33	8/00
Triumph Sprint RS ('00)	93.6 @ 9250	61.5 @ 5250	11.76 @ 110.4	4.77	512	34	6/00
Triumph Sprint ST ('99)	102.8 @ 9250	65.2 @ 5250	11.53 @ 116.3	3.83	530	45	8/99
Triumph T509 Speed Triple ('97)	83.4 @ 9000	53.5 @ 7500	11.71 @ 114.1	4.59	477	37	8/97
Triumph T595 Daytona ('97)	108.8 @ 9500	67.9 @ 7500	10.80 @ 126.4	3.55	490	34	10/97
Triumph Tiger ('99)	72.0 @ 8250	48.1 @ 5750	13.15 @ 101.1	6.51	550	42	12/99
Yamaha Road Star ('99)	56.8 @ 4000	88.5 @ 2250	14.44 @ 88.9		740	43	7/99
Yamaha Royal Star Tour Deluxe ('97)			14.57 @ 90.0		793	37	7/97
Yamaha Royal Star Venture ('99)	81.7 @ 6000	79.7 @ 4500	13.66 @ 93.6	8.74	890	32	8/99
Yamaha V-Max ('97)	118.2 @ 8500	84.6 @ 6000	10.87 @ 124.0		616	33	1/97
Yamaha YZF600R ('97)	88.5 @ 11,000	45.9 @ 9750	11.31 @ 118.9	4.96	485	44	5/97
Yamaha YZF-R1 ('00)	127.8 @ 10,250	72.2 @ 8500	10.29 @ 135.3	3.02	443	39	7/00
Yamaha YZF-R6 ('00)	96.4 @ 12,500	42.4 @ 10,750	11.23 @ 123.2	5.29	425	38	8/00
Victory V92C ('98)	56.0 @ 4850	74.9 @ 3300	14.28 @ 90.0		692	38	7/99

* Performance with test-session weather conditions corrected to sea-level standard conditions (59 degrees F, 29.92 in. of mercury).

**Months listed in *italics* are issues the motorcycle was tested in *Sport Rider*.

Test numbers used here generated by the *Motorcyclist* staff using a Dynojet 150 rear-wheel dynamometer, Intercomp SWII digital scale and Los Angeles County Raceway's quarter-mile strip utilizing a Chrondek timing system.



archive



JAMES BROWN

Honda CX500 and CX650 Turbo 1982-1983

IN 1982, TURBOCHARGING SEEMED to be the magic wand, summoning liter-bike performance from a midsize motorcycle.

Honda knew its first turbo offering would have to be a technological *tour de force* in its own right. With its digital fuel injection, air-assisted fork with hydraulic antitive, aluminum swing-arm and Pro-link single-shock rear suspension, the CX500 Turbo seemed to have it all.

Looks were deceiving. The CX500T was certainly quick enough, generating quarter-mile runs in the low-12-second range. But Honda had to boost the snot out of the little twin to get such performance, with a maximum boost pressure of 17.4 psi. To make matters worse, the CX's turbocharger was slow to spool up,

meaning the bike suffered from terrible turbo lag. Whack open the throttle off boost and it was a slug. But when all that boost kicked in, the CX flat took off.

Honda made huge improvements to its turbo bike for 1983. Boost was lowered to a

...the CX's turbocharger was slow to spool up, meaning the bike suffered from terrible turbo lag.

slightly more civilized 16.4 psi, but the greatest gains came from a displacement increase to 674cc. This gave the bike much better low-end and midrange power.

When shopping for a Honda Turbo, beware of bikes needing repair, because

the CX500T and CX650T were built for only one year each, so parts are expensive and hard to find. This is especially true of pieces for the electronic fuel injection, exhaust, bodywork and turbo, so make certain the bike is complete, that it runs well, and that the turbo is in good working order. Also check the electrical output, since the heat generated by the turbo tended to fry stators.

While the turbo bikes of the early 1980s never succeeded in bringing big-displacement power to midsize motorcycles, they did succeed in becoming extremely collectible, and Honda's Turbos are among the most prized of this rarified breed. Prices for clean bikes run in the \$3000 to \$3500 range.

—Darwin Holmstrom

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